

Y A L E T A L K S
BY CHARLES REYNOLDS BROWN

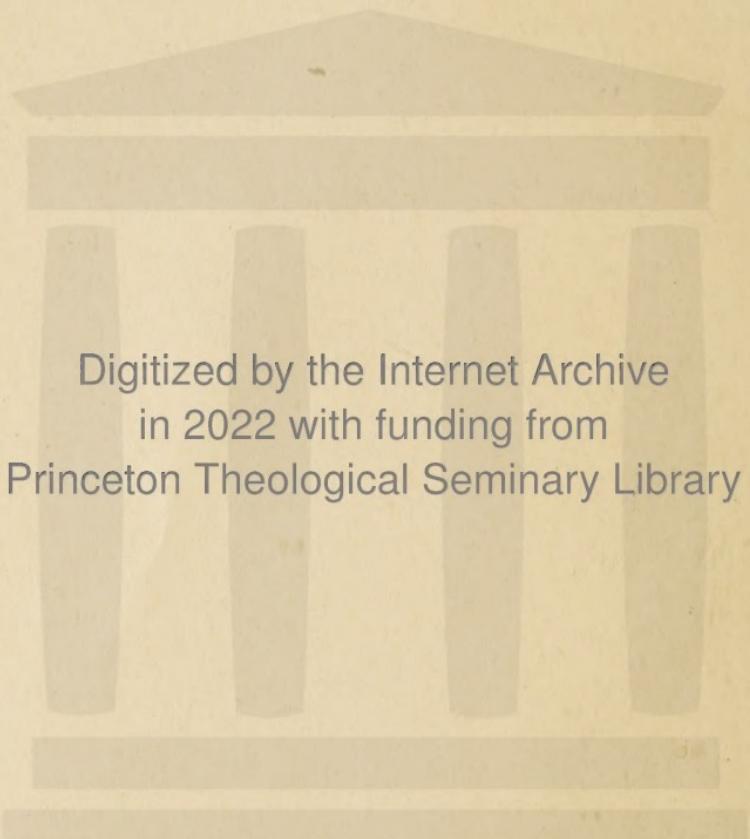


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Yale Talks

by

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Foreword

THESE "Talks" were given in Battell Chapel at Yale University. Some of them were also given at Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Cornell, Amherst, Williams, Bowdoin, Brown and other colleges. In putting them in book form I have retained the more intimate style of direct address as best preserving the atmosphere of personal conference in which they were first uttered. They are brought together here in the hope that they may be of use to other young men who are making up their minds as to their mode of life and deciding upon the purposes which are to rule the great years that lie ahead.

CHAS. R. BROWN.

Yale University,
June 18, 1919.

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I

The True Definition of a Man

THERE is one question I would like to ask you now that the examinations are over. It is a question every fellow must answer as he makes his way up to his maturity and when he gets his marks they are not made on paper, they are made on him. He may not answer my question in writing, but he will answer it in the choice he makes of a ruling ambition. How would you define a man? What does it mean to be a man?

When we look back we find that a great variety of answers has been given to this question. There was a time when everybody said, "Man is a victim." He is "a victim crying in the night and with no language but a cry." He is cursed by the gods, doomed to eat his bread by hard labor in the sweat of his brow. He is at the mercy of all manner of demons and hobgoblins with which the ancients peopled the unseen world. He is a poor worm of the dust, not entitled to hold up his head among these titanic forces which are hostile to him. "Man is a victim," and they said it with a whine.

We find a curious remnant of that notion in our

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own day. Some men are still saying, "Heredity and environment have us bound hand and foot." They insist that there is no such thing as freedom, no power of initiative, no will to choose. Man does not as he chooses, but as he must. We are what we are by the operation of forces which we cannot control. Whatever is had to be, whatever will be will be, whether we like it or not. Gloomy, disheartened determinism is not confined to a few sad-eyed philosophers shut up in a closet—it is sometimes proclaimed from the housetops and preached at the street corners. There are those who still insist that man is a helpless victim.

But that idea has largely passed for people who are in sound health mentally as well as physically. Man saw a long time ago that he need not be a poor shuddering victim. He saw that he could have dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air, over the cattle and the creeping things. He saw that he could compel heat and light, gravitation and electricity to minister to his own comfort and progress. He began to make himself at home among these titanic forces. He learned to stand erect and to read. He began to face the world undaunted. And whatever answer we might get from Young America today we may be sure that it would not accept the verdict that man is a victim.

We come then to a second answer which has more edge on it. How would you define a man?

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There was a time when everyone said, "Man is a fighter." He stood in a militant attitude, fighting the common enemies of hunger and cold, disease and death, fighting also the neighboring tribes and making enemies of them. Every man was measured by the length and the strength of his sword. The greatest man in the tribe was the man who could kill the largest number of his enemies without being killed in the process.

In ancient Israel Saul was made king because he stood head and shoulders above his fellows. He was neither a wise man nor a good man, but he was a big, strapping, successful fighter and they crowned him. In mediaeval Europe the men most honored were the plumed knights and the helmeted warriors, who went forth with sword and spear to fight their good fights. In Japan the ancient aristocracy, the Samurai, belonged entirely to the military class. War was a trade and the trade held in highest esteem. If we had asked our question then, the answer would have come back with a clash of steel—"Man is a fighter."

We find also a considerable remnant of that idea in our own day. The ladies have a way of indicating that their gentle hearts are strangely stirred by the sight of marching men in khaki. And men will pay larger sums of money for a briefer period of entertainment to witness a prize fight than for almost any kind of performance which can be named. The most respectable na-

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tions show a strange satisfaction in their Krupp guns and dreadnaughts. If we should ask our question now, in some quarters the answer would still come back, "Man is a fighter."

But that mood is passing. The high office of civilization is not to destroy men's lives but to save them and train them in productive effort. The swords will have to be beaten into ploughshares. With the keen competition and the close margins in business, we have no steel to waste. The bright metal of the nation's young manhood must more and more move out along those lines of action which are productive rather than destructive.

I say all this in the face of the most terrible war which has ever devastated the earth. Where there were ten men five years ago thinking about "a league of nations," or some other effective method of keeping the peace and good order of the world, now there are a hundred. The thought of making the idea of public justice the determining factor in the life of the race has been taken out of the hands of impossible dreamers and brought upon the map of practical statesmanship. The ideals of the common people have been changing rapidly. When the people of France were asked some ten years ago to express their judgment in a great popular vote as to who was the greatest Frenchman in history, nine millions of ballots were cast. When the votes were counted, it was found that

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the largest number had not been given to Napoleon, the man of battles, who destroyed the lives of a million men. The largest number had been given to Pasteur, the man of science, who in the quiet work of his laboratory laid the foundations for saving the lives of untold millions. Man is not mainly nor permanently a fighter.

We come then to a third and more practical answer—"Man is a producer, a money-maker." The greatest man in any group is the man who makes the most, if he makes it honestly. Men go about measuring each other not with yardsticks, nor by the length of their swords, but with bank notes. Here is a man who is fifty thousand feet high! Here is another man who is one hundred thousand feet high. Here is a third man who is a million feet high—he is a millionaire! And here at the side is a poor chap who is decidedly "short." He is no taller than thirty cents.

The love of money lies at the root of all manner of things good and bad. It stirs up wholesome ambitions and it arouses the meanest desires of the heart. The wish to better one's condition is honest and legitimate, but the spirit of greed becomes responsible for the lowest vices and crimes.

There are men who believe in what they call "the economic interpretation of history." They insist that history was not shaped by great men nor by great principles, but by the economic con-

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ditions under which men found themselves. Men were thrust in this direction or in that by their love of wealth or by their lack of it. They insist that the desire for gain has been the determining principle in human action.

I can not hold with them, but I confess that there is something about the career of a man who organizes and develops some industry to the point where he accumulates a large fortune which appeals to me strongly. The people who inherit their wealth do not necessarily amount to anything—all they had to do was to wait for somebody to die. The men who gamble for their fortunes, whether they do it on the stock exchange or at a green table, are not interesting to me—in order to become rich they made other men poor. But the man who goes out with nothing but his own energy of body and cleverness of brain to a mill or a mine, a farm or a factory, a store or a railroad, and by enlarging the scope of it as a social utility becomes rich, that man appeals to me most strongly.

And I have noticed that the young man, who talks scornfully about money and money-making as being entirely beneath his notice, is usually insincere or looney. Money is a very nice thing, a very necessary thing, and no man of sense speaks scornfully of money. And because the desire for gain does enter so powerfully into human experience, if we should ask our question

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about the definition of a man in the market place, the answer might come back from a thousand throats, "Man is a money-maker, and the greatest man here is the man who makes the most, if he makes it honestly."

But this answer will not stand. It leaves unprovided for great areas of man's nature. We cannot define the nature or measure the success of any man in terms of dollars and cents. "How much is that man worth?" we sometimes ask. Ordinarily we are not thinking of the worth of the man, but merely of the value of the things he happens to own. This can be easily ascertained from Bradstreet or the assessor's book or from his report on income tax. The worth of the man is another question altogether—it turns upon his qualities of mind and heart, upon the amount of good he has done and the character he has won. He may be worth a great deal in addition to the things he owns, or with a vast abundance of things he may not be worth enough to pay for the powder and shot it would require to blow him up. The worth of the man is a question of personality.

The current ideals are changing here. When I was a boy the names of the richest men in America were names to conjure with; they sent a thrill through any popular audience. The names of the richest men in America today are not always names to conjure with. It all depends upon the measure of public spirit and the quality

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of personal character in the man. The thought of man as a money-maker does not touch the deeper things of life, and this answer, therefore, will not stand.

We come then to an answer which would receive more acceptance on a college campus—"Man is a thinker." The true measure of a man is not to be found in the length of his sword or in the size of his roll of bank notes, but in those curious gray convolutions of the brain which make possible his intellectual life. The man of insight and judgment, of outlook and discrimination! The man of original and creative ability—here surely we find man at his best.

And if the man can not only think but write, then how great he becomes! Here is a man who can sit down without weapons or wealth, with no army at his back, with no powerful organization to give him influence—with nothing but pen, paper and ink! By what he writes he can influence men by the thousand, by the million, it may be! Men of his own land and of all lands, men of his own day and men of generations yet unborn! There is not an hour in the twenty-four when the sun is not shining straight down at high noon somewhere on the plays of Shakespeare and the poems of Dante. There is not a land nor a language where the orations of Moses and Isaiah, the songs of David and the proverbs of Solomon, the letters of Paul and the parables of Jesus, are

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not exercising their influence upon the aspirations and the conduct of men. Great is the man who can think, and think until he has something to say, and then say it in such fashion as to lodge his truth in the life of the race! Surely we find man here at his best!

We have coined this estimate into proverbs, "Knowledge is power." "The world belongs to the man who knows." "Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore get wisdom and with all thy getting get understanding." And the names to conjure with today are the names of Plato and Aristotle at one end of the line and Kant and Hegel, Darwin and Huxley, Edison and Metchnikoff, at the other. These are the men who show human nature at its best, for man is beyond all else a thinker!

Now far be it from me to utter one syllable in depreciation of knowledge. This last answer is not an unworthy one, but is an imperfect one. It does not reach that which is fundamental. I have passed in review these four answers, the victim with his whine, the fighter with his sword, the money-maker with his roll of bank notes, and the thinker with his book. In my judgment not one of them is worthy to stand.

Here in the house of the Lord suppose we ask the Lord Himself how He would define a man. We will appeal from these lower courts to the highest in order to have a Supreme Court decision

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on this vital question. "O Thou who knowest what was in man and needed not that any should tell Thee, how wouldest Thou define a man?"

Listen! "Ye know that among the Gentiles the great ones exercise lordship and dominion. It shall not be so among you. If any man would be great among you, let him serve. The greatest of all is the servant of all."

Man at his best is a servant. He rises as he stoops to serve. He reaches his greatness through his competence and his willingness to serve. This is what the Perfect Man said and this is what the Perfect Man did. "He took upon Himself the form of a servant and went about doing good." Wherefore God and the ages have exalted Him until His name is above every name.

You can see at a glance that we have now reached that which is fundamental. The life of any individual will be measured and estimated in the long run by its utility in serving the more permanent interests of human society. In the great kingdom of moral reality, usefulness is the ultimate standard. Ideally, "Man is a servant."

What made those two men, born the same year, one on that side of the water, one on this, men so unlike in the whole outward setting of their lives and so essentially in agreement in spirit—what made those two men, William Ewart Gladstone and Abraham Lincoln so highly esteemed and so widely beloved?

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Gladstone was born to wealth, his home was in a castle. He had a fine social position from the first, every house in England was open to him from Buckingham Palace down. He had all that education could do for a man—he was a graduate of Christ Church College in Oxford University. He enjoyed the benefits of foreign travel. He was one of the handsomest men of his day and thoroughly accustomed to all of the amenities of social life in one of the great capitals of the world. He thrice became Prime Minister of the British Empire and was esteemed great.

Abraham Lincoln was poor. He was born in a log cabin. He was never allowed to attend school but twelve months in his whole life. He gained his education mainly as he lay upon the floor before an open fire piled with pine knots reading such books as he could command. He was one of the homeliest men who ever walked and he knew little about the conventions of "society." He was never outside of the United States. But he, too, became genuinely great.

These men were esteemed because they lived and died to serve. However men might agree or disagree with some of the policies of Gladstone, they came to feel that here was a man bent upon laying his splendid abilities upon the altar of service in the British Empire. And Abraham Lincoln lived in the spirit of that Book which John Hay, his secretary, tells us lay always on his desk, and

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in which he was accustomed to read every day. The Book says, "Whosoever saveth his life shall lose it, but whosoever loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Lincoln found himself, he found his place in the hearts of his countrymen, and he found his niche in the temple of fame because he lived and died to serve.

It was so in the life of the Perfect Man. He took these broken lights of human greatness and set them in their true perspective. He also suffered, but not as unwilling victim—He suffered as one who freely sacrificed Himself for others. He, too, was a fighter, but never with the carnal weapons which destroy men's lives. He fought with those spiritual weapons, instruction, persuasion, moral appeal, the power of right example, which are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of evil. He was rich in personal endowment and in high privilege, yet for our sakes He became poor that by His poverty He might make many rich. He was a thinker—He could speak as never man spake, and say without fear of contradiction, "I am the Truth." But underneath all else He was a servant. He translated the language of religion into terms of life as "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." He became the Eternal Servant of that larger good which waits upon the spirit of unselfish devotion.

Let me read you a single leaf from the book of

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experience! It is not a newspaper story—it occurred in my own parish while I was a pastor in California. There was a woman, a wife and a mother, who had undergone a capital surgical operation. She did not rally afterward. The loss of blood and the nervous shock brought her to the verge of death. The surgeons after a hasty consultation told her husband that unless something radical was done at once her life could not be saved; that indeed the only hope lay in the transfusion of blood from some healthy, vigorous body.

She had three sons, great, strapping fellows in the heyday of their youth. When the facts were made known to them, they offered themselves at once. The surgeon took them apart in the adjoining room and had them strip that he might hastily decide which one would best serve. If any one of them had allowed his blood to be tainted by some wretched vice, if he had depleted his vitality by some miserable indulgence, he would have been cut off in that high hour from the chance of serving the mother in her time of peril. The surgeon ran them over and found every one of them sound, clean, abundantly alive. They were all fit—any one of them would do. One of them was chosen and the artery of strength was opened and connected with the veins of weakness. Then the heart of that young man, clean in every sense of the word, pumped out of

its own store of life a fresh stock of vitality into that other life which trembled on the brink. The mother's life was saved and restored. She is alive today, rejoicing in the companionship of those three fine sons.

How splendid that they were in shape to do it! How fine that in the years past they had so lived that when the call came not one of them needed to flinch. All unwittingly for her sake they had lived the life. It is the strongest incentive to righteousness, it is the strongest deterrent from evil that I know—the thought of serving some other life in a time of emergency which may be physical or mental or moral. For her sake, for his sake, "for their sakes, I sanctify myself" and live the life.

Give me your answer then—How would you define a man? What do you propose to show to the world thirty years from now and say to it, "This is my conception of what it means to be a man." If you show it a victim whining because life has been hard and the luck has been against you, you will be ashamed of yourself every time you look in the glass. If you show it a fighter, beating and bruising your way, injuring others in order to succeed, all of your friends will be ashamed of you. If you show it nothing but a money-maker, feathering your own nest to make it soft and warm, you will deny all the best traditions of this university. If you show it merely a

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thinker, who does not carry his insights over into achievements and translate his knowledge into power for service, then still your life will be barren. But if you will say to yourself, "Man is a servant," and allow that thought to rule your life, then you will count one in that sacramental host which is destined to trample evil in the dust and make this earth at last as fair as the sky.

II

The Value of an Empty Purse

HERE is a short story about a young man who had been having his fling! He had come into a large fortune early in life, which is always a perilous experience. Where a young fellow earns his money by the sweat of his own brow he usually learns something about the value of money. Where he earns his pleasure by hard work first, he knows something about the real meaning of pleasure. But where all this is thrust into his hand by a piece of generosity which he calls "good fortune" and God calls "misfortune" oftentimes, he is liable to make a mess of it.

This young fellow had also been living abroad, which is another perilous experience. He had gathered all together and had taken his journey into a far country. The young man in Paris or Vienna with a big bank account or a generous letter of credit is not nearly so well placed as he would be if he were earning his own living plowing corn in South Dakota or working in a factory in Paterson, New Jersey.

The odds were against him—it would have taken a strong moral nature to have faced that

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combination of circumstances successfully, and this young fellow had not the necessary stuff in him to do it. He fell down. He wasted his substance in riotous living. He made friends with men who were bad and with women who were worse. He went the pace and it was rapid. He thought he was having the time of his life—in his poor silly little head that was all he knew. But he soon came to the end of his time such as it was—he bumped his way down the cellar stairs until he found himself at the bottom. “He had spent all and he began to be in want.” He took out his purse and there was nothing in it—not a sou. And just there “he came to himself.” He began for the first time to get his bearings. He saw the value of an empty purse.

What help did this young man get out of his pocketbook when it was as flat as his own feelings? In the first place, he was compelled to cut out a lot of evil indulgences. It costs money to be downright wicked. No man can travel the primrose path unless he has the price. He may have been in the habit of getting drunk, but if he is entirely out of money he will have to live soberly for a while. He may have been indulging in the excitement of gambling, but with an empty purse he will have to call a halt on that form of vice. He may have been making merry with harlots as this fellow had been doing, but without money he cannot go on—their smiles have to be

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paid for in cash. The way of the transgressor is expensive as well as hard—and it grows harder and more expensive the longer a man travels it. This is God's own good way of reminding the transgressor that he is off the track.

This young man had to stop because his money was gone—he could not pay for any more dissipation. It is an honor to a man when he can walk the streets of the wickedest city on earth with a full purse and turn his back on all the allurements to wrongdoing. He could, but he will not, because he is a man of principle. If, however, a man has not reached that level of moral development he had better have his supplies cut off for a season. If he is unable to carry a full purse and run straight, let him carry an empty one for a time. It was a distinct advantage to this young man to be cut off from further indulgence by his lack of means. "He had spent all and began to be in want"—and at the same time he began to be a man.

In the second place, his empty purse compelled him to go to work. He had to do it to put bread in his mouth. He was "perishing with hunger and no man gave to him." He, therefore, stood out in the open and said to the world, "Make me a hired servant. From this hour let me pull my own weight in the boat and earn my way man-fashion."

The sting of want—it is the only thing that is sharp enough to transform many an idler into a

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worker! It takes the hard slap of necessity to change the spender into a producer. You meet droves of people who have fallen into the easy, disgraceful habit of eating their bread by the sweat of other men's brows. They are parasites on the social body, feeding on the vitality of others without producing anything of their own. They are like those fat, lazy, green worms, which crawl around on the trees in the spring filling themselves with food which they did nothing to produce. They have not energy enough to change the green leaves into any decent sort of flesh color. They simply lay their food around their bodies in soft, green wads—you can look at them and tell what they ate last.

Heaven be praised for hard work! Heaven be praised for the necessity which makes it for most of us not an elective but a required course! We might not take it otherwise—it is so easy to look for snap courses in the world. It is the making of a man; it furnishes the necessary discipline to transform human pulp into manhood with some genuine mental and moral fibre in it.

Let every soul offer that same prayer—"Make me the hired servant of my own need and of the common good." Wherever men and women are allowed to go on indefinitely, finding the way greased for them by lavish expenditure and generous tips, with no chance to come into contact with the rough side of the board, they are liable to

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bring up in perdition. "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," Paul said once to a young man he had in tow. "Study to show thyself a workman that need not be ashamed." It is in that direction that honor lies.

It would be a great gain if every young man had to face the world with his coat off; if he were compelled to lay hold on some difficult task with both hands; if he were made to lift on some heavy load until the sweat came; if he were set to think hard upon some problem until he felt the tug of it on his own brain. It is by that process that muscle and gray matter and character are developed.

It is by meeting some situation which offers a challenge to the best powers a man has and meeting it without flinching that he adds cubits to his stature. What under Heaven is life for but just that! And I am afraid that hundreds of us might not do it unless we had to. It is the empty purse, the sting of want, the thrust of necessity which drives many a man out and bids him strive.

Hear this word of Edison, the great worker as well as the great inventor of our day! "Genius," he says, "may be two per cent inspiration, but it is ninety-eight per cent perspiration." One of his assistants told me that Edison worked for ten years to invent his storage battery, which would harness the forces of the lightning to the homely tasks of earth; and that during that period he was

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always in his laboratory at seven-thirty every morning. He had his lunch sent to him in the shop. He went home to dinner, but he usually came back in the evening to have another try at it in the quiet of the night.

He was there working, often until midnight, while thousands of empty-headed pleasure seekers of whom the world will never hear were dancing up and down the great White Ways of earth with more dollars than sense. He made hundreds of experiments during those years. He built models by the score and then discarded them. But through repeated failure he moved ahead to a splendid success. He invented his storage battery and the whole world is richer for what he did. And he tells us that his highest joy in life has been found in matching his strength and skill against baffling problems and seeing them finally win out.

In these recent years we have been putting rubber tires on pretty much everything and it has not always been an unmixed advantage. We need some of the jolts. It is possible to make life so easy and comfortable as to fail of the best results. With high-priced kindergartens at one end of the educational system making the business of learning a sweet little game and with certain colleges at the other end of the system offering unlimited electives and no very searching requirements, there are young people who may get it into their

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heads that there is such a thing as "painless education." Painless education to match the "painless dentistry" we sometimes see advertised, chiefly by quacks!

There is no such thing—it cannot be done. You cannot be carried to the skies of mental and moral efficiency on flowery beds of ease, it matters not how much money you are prepared to pay for the privilege. There are no parlor cars on the trains which run that way. Somewhere along the road, all along the road, I would say, there must be hard, serious, manly study. The only men who arrive are the men who take the middle of the road with all the dust and discomfort that may involve and put it through. They work out their own salvation. And when they get it worked out it is salvation.

In the county where my father lived for fifty years there was a young man about my own age, who was born to wealth. He had a home filled with comforts and luxuries. His father generously gave him a good education, the advantages of travel and all the other good things which money could buy. In that case the result was that when the young man was forty years old he had failed in his chosen profession, he had added nothing whatever to the moral forces of the community and he was a very indifferent sort of citizen. He was simply one hundred and eighty-five pounds of well-dressed meat. He was bewailing the poor

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use he had made of his life to a friend one day. He remarked, "The best thing my father could have done for me when I was twenty years old would have been to have given me a half a dollar and kicked me out into the street." "George," the friend replied, "why did you not take a half a dollar and kick yourself out?" He had not the strength of mind to do it. He had genuine ability and a great deal of personal charm, and I have the feeling that an empty purse might have been the making of him.

Who was it who said this, "My Father worketh even until now and I work"? His highest conception of God was of a Being who from the first hour when the morning stars sang together down through the countless ages, had been engaged in a ceaseless, tireless, beneficent putting forth of His energy in work. His highest conception of human life was embodied in the action of a Man who took upon Himself the form of a servant, went about doing good and kept it up until He could say, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do." The Master worked voluntarily because He was the Perfect, the Typal, the Representative Man, the Son of Man. But however it comes, whether from choice or from necessity, from a high resolve or from the promptings of an empty purse, honor that impulse which sends you forth to your own appointed work.

In the third place, the young man's empty purse

enabled him to see the difference between false friends and true. While he was rich he was immensely popular. He had friends galore, as he thought. He was "a good spender," as the foolish phrase runs, and he found plenty of foolish friends, male and female, to help him spend his money. He was courted and flattered on all sides. He thought that all those people liked him when as a matter of fact they merely liked his money.

The moment his money was gone he found that all those false friends were gone, too. "He began to be in want and no man gave to him"—that was the heartbreaking part of it. Among all those followers who had been drawn about him by his reckless spending there was not a man nor a woman who cared enough for him to give him a meal. His fat purse had blinded him to their real characters, but now with an empty purse as a field glass he could see them as they were, and he saw them vanishing in the distance as rats leave a sinking ship.

It is good for us to get down to hardpan now and then, where we are liked or disliked not for what we have, but for what we are. It is good for us to meet men not as the paid servants of our pleasure nor as tradesmen eager for our patronage, but simply man to man. No man's life consists of the abundance nor of the scarcity of the things he possesses. The only friends worth having are those who take us not for what we

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own, but for what we are. And those real friends are in no wise affected by the ups or downs in our bank accounts. But when a man's purse is empty he knows "who's who" without looking in a big red book. He can distinguish instantly between the false friends and the true.

In one of Martin Maartens' stories he speaks of the social habits in a certain city which had become hopelessly commercialized. If a man was poor they shouted his name at him in harsh tones as if they had been announcing the name of some small station on the railroad. If a man was worth a hundred thousand dollars they addressed him in tones of quiet respect. If a man was worth two hundred thousand they gave him exactly twice as much deference. If he had a million they lowered their voices almost to a whisper and folded their hands in his presence as they did when they were in church. They did not reverence the man, but they reverenced his money. "They worshipped money," the author says, "because they felt that a man who does not worship money is a socialist, and a socialist is an atheist, and an atheist is a man with no religion." Therefore, because they were religious "after their kind" they worshiped money with a deep and holy reverence. In that city no one knew who his real friends were unless his purse was empty.

There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, whose feeling for us is in no wise affected

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by our rating in Bradstreet. He was equally at home with Zaccheus, the richest man in Jericho, and with that blind beggar, who was the poorest man in Jerusalem. And He liked to construe His own relationships in terms of personal friendship. "I have called you friends," He said one day to a group of eager, active, red-blooded, young men. "I have called you friends"—and friends they were, even though their means were small. Many a man flattered and pampered in the days of his prosperity never learns what a friend Jesus Christ can be until the hour strikes when all his prosperity vanishes. In that hour, not knowing where else to look, he looks up, and sees a Friend. His purse is empty, but his heart is full because he has entered into that personal fellowship with an Eternal Friend, which is ennobling beyond any other influence which enters the human soul. Rejoice in the day of adversity if it enables you to see the difference between false friends and true.

In the fourth place, the young man's empty purse gave him a new standard of values. He had been in the habit of purchasing his satisfactions with cash. He purchased some of them at the bar and some of them, the story says, in the brothel. He purchased some of them in worthier places, but they all came to him because he had the price. He had fallen into a way of thinking that there was nothing under Heaven or in Heaven which money would not buy. He said to himself,

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"I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Then God stripped him of all he had and set him out in the open, a poor, naked, shivering soul with nothing but an empty purse.

In that very hour "he came to himself." He saw himself as he was in the clear daylight of reality rather than in the night-light of thoughtless dissipation. He said, "I have sinned—but I will make an about face. I have been wasting my substance as a useless spender, now I will become a producer, the hired servant of the common good. I have been throwing away my chance in this far country. Now I will go back where I belong. I have cut myself off from those relationships which are wholesome and rewarding. Now I will arise and go to my father." And he went, step by step, a long, tedious journey of moral renewal, but every step in the right direction. He went poor in purse, but rich in high resolve and in a new appreciation of those values which are supreme.

You may, if you choose, allow your empty purse to make you sour—you can stand off looking with envy upon those who possess what you would like to possess and cannot. You may, if you choose, allow your empty purse to make you hard and defiant—you fling out your resentment at a world which has dealt you such a sorry hand with no kings and queens in it. You may, if you choose, allow your empty purse to become so heavy with the sense of disappointment which takes the place

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of bank notes as to send you through life broken and depressed. All these lines of action are open to you, and mistaken men travel them all. But, if you choose, you may allow that bit of adversity to furnish you the chance to show yourself every inch a man, honored and valued for your personal qualities of mind and heart. In that event your empty purse will give you a new and better standard of values.

There was a young man once who came to Christ with great possessions. He was a clean-living, serious-minded fellow, who had kept all the commandments from his youth up. The Master looked him over and took his measure. Then He said to him in effect something like this, "There are men who have the necessary moral fibre to be masters of their possessions. There are rich men who enter the Kingdom of Heaven, administering their wealth in harmony with the great Christian ideals. It is not an easy task—it is like putting a camel through the eye of a needle—but by the grace of God it can be done." And where a rich man is thoroughly Christian in all his acts and attitudes he is a kind of masterpiece in God's gallery of good men. "But you," Jesus said to the young ruler, "have not it in you to do that great thing. Your only safety lies in parting with your wealth and in following Me. You need to meet your fellow men and your Maker with an empty purse because your means have blinded you

II—Value of an Empty Purse

thus far to the deeper things of life.” The young man would not meet that hard test—it was a challenge to the best there was in him, but he refused. He turned away sorrowful for he loved money more than he loved manhood.

How fine, on the other hand, are the moral results of self-sacrifice and discipline! It is good for everyone to learn how to subordinate his own personal comfort and pleasure to some larger interest. In that school the men who have the future in their hands are now being trained. The Head Master of Eton, the famous English boys' school, was at one time a stern, old chap whose name was Keats. One winter morning he met a small boy who was crying. “What’s the matter with you?” the Master called out, in his gruff way. “I’m cold,” the boy whimpered. “Cold, you must not complain of the cold. This is no girls’ school.”

It was a harsh reply, but the sniveling boy had a spark of manhood in him which caught fire. He stopped crying and he never forgot that stern command. Fifteen years later he was riding at the head of his own regiment of Dragoons in India. When the order came to charge on the entrenched Sihks he gathered up his bridle rein, swung himself into the saddle and called out to a brother officer who had also studied at Eton, “Well, as old Keats used to say, ‘This is no girls’ school!’ but here goes!” Then he rode on, to his death, as the event proved, but the charge brought

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victory that day to the English Army and the extension of the British Empire there beneath the *Southern Cross*. How splendid are the results of discipline, bravely met and nobly born, in the making of that manhood which is the image of God on earth.

III

The Lure of Goodness

THREE is a feeling in certain quarters that being good is dull work. There are men who talk as if wickedness would always be found interesting and exciting, where righteousness would be tame and spiritless. When young men speak of going off to some great city to "see life" they usually have in mind something immoral. They think that that sort of thing is "life" and that the decencies are more or less dead.

The newspapers have helped to create that notion. They give an inordinate amount of space to the vices and crimes of men—it is out of all proportion to the real significance of such action. A man may go straight along about his business for fifty years without ever causing anybody to look around. But if he does something outrageously wicked he will be in all the papers next morning with headlines and pictures. The newspapers insist that this is "news." They think that everybody will want to read about it. They have the same curious notion that wickedness is interesting while goodness is dull.

Now my own feeling is that all those people are

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just as crazy as they would be if they went around insisting that two and two make five or fifty. They have not learned to add or to subtract. They cannot even see the figures on the board and tell what they mean. The most fascinating pursuit in the world is that of being good. The finest form of adventure upon which any man can enter is the quest for goodness and for God in the depths of his own soul. It has not become common enough to rob it of a certain air of romance. If you wish to find the zest and relish of life, do that. "The lure of goodness" is my theme and if I could lift it up so that you would see it as it is it would draw you to it.

Here in the New Testament was One who made goodness interesting. He began His life in a picturesque sort of way. He was born in the manger of a stable, which was an odd place to be born. He grew up in a carpenter's home and in a carpenter shop. He never saw the inside of a college, yet somehow He learned to think straight and to speak as never man spake. He had the courage of his convictions because He knew what He was talking about. When He was thirty years old He stood up boldly and said to the men of His day, "I am the Way, walk in it; and the Truth, believe it; and the Life, live it, and it will make you free." Some of the men who heard Him tried it, and they found that it was so.

He went about turning the various maxims of

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human conduct end for end. “It hath been said by them of old time, but I say unto you”—something entirely different. And when He did that everyone saw that those principles of righteousness fitted into the needs of everyday life as they never had before. He went about turning things upside down, and when He did that people saw that for the first time things were right side up. He was free, brave, original, in His method of being good and when men watched Him live they went away saying, “We never saw it on this fashion.”

He taught not as the scribes who had learned their lesson out of a book but as one having the authority of first-hand knowledge of spiritual things. He clothed His message in the ordinary words of everyday life, “and the common people heard Him gladly.” He said that the new principle of life He had come to introduce into the world was like “salt,” it was like “yeast,” it was like “mustard seed.” He compared it to all manner of homely things which had some punch in them. He said in a blunt way, “No man can serve two masters.” Men cannot serve God and money at the same time without getting things mixed. He said obedience to the law of God was like building one’s house on solid rock, and disobedience was like building it on the sand. He said that prayer is as simple and natural as the act of a child asking his father for bread or fish or an

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egg. And because those fathers in Palestine, faulty though they were, knew how to give good gifts to their children, they felt the force of the claim He made on behalf of prayer to the Heavenly Father. When the common people heard Him talking about goodness after that manner they followed Him about in droves as if He had been a circus procession instead of a teacher of religion. They had never heard it on that fashion before and they could not seem to get enough of it.

He went habitually among the people who needed Him most. He chose publicans and sinners for His intimates and made saints of them. He picked up worthless beggars and women of the street and by the sheer contagion of His own life made new people of them. "I came not to call the righteous"—He said this with a smile for He knew that those self-satisfied prigs who were sneering at Him were anything but righteous—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He laid His strong, clean hands on lepers to their amazement for they had not felt the touch of healthy flesh for years; and when He took His hands away the lepers were cleansed. He told a lame man to stand up and walk and there was such a note of authority in His voice that the lame man tried and found to his joy that he could. He opened the eyes of the blind and unstopped the ears of the deaf, causing men to

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see and to hear what they had never seen nor heard before. He loved men, bad men as often as not, because they needed it rather than because they deserved it. When He died He was not lying in a comfortable bed, he was hanging on a Cross. He was hanging there not bewailing His fate nor denouncing the men who had crucified Him. He was praying for them with a tenderness which ought to have melted a heart of stone—"Father, forgive them; for they know not." And when He went out of this world He was carrying a penitent robber in His arms—"into Paradise," He said.

Now all that is interesting! There is not a dull line anywhere in the life of the Perfect, the Typal, the Representative Man, the Son of Man. We print and circulate more copies of the little book containing the story of His life a hundred times over than of any other volume you can name. It came out nineteen hundred years ago and it is still a best seller. We date our calendars from the date of His birth—1919 we say, for it is just that long since He was born in the manger of the stable. We call the fairest portion of the globe "Christendom"—His part of it. His words have become household words in more homes and in more hearts than those of any other one who ever walked the earth. He has a grip on the thoughts, the hopes and the high resolves of men at this hour which cannot be matched. He is interesting.

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Lift Him up anywhere until men see Him as He is and He draws them to Him.

How do you account for it? What is the secret of the interest which attaches to his style of goodness? I can think of several elements in it which are suggestive.

In the first place He was perfectly natural. He never posed. He never seemed to be playing a part. He was not being good to be seen of men. He never said to Himself, "Now this is what would be expected of a man in my position." He was what He was without ever seeming to think about how it might look to others—He was not concerned about that.

You know Bernard Shaw says that if you go to a symphony concert you will find many people who are there not because they like classical music but because they know they ought to like it and that it is the proper thing to be seen at the symphony, and so they go. In like manner, when you get to Heaven you may find people there who are there not because they have any real taste or fitness for that sort of thing but because they feel that they owe it to their social position to be in Heaven. How mighty are the conventions of society and how dull and tiresome they make thousands of people who become slaves to them! Those people might be interesting if they would only be themselves.

How simple and natural Jesus was. He lived

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not as the scribes but as one whose goodness was vital. His life, therefore, was with power.

He began his public ministry not in the synagogue nor at the temple but at a wedding. He wrought His first mighty work there because the people He was interested in were at the wedding. When He turned the water of the occasion into wine the people felt that the best joy of their lives had been kept until that hour.

He came not like John the Baptist, neither eating nor drinking in an ordinary way but living apart in the desert on locusts and wild honey in an unnatural, ascetic fashion. He came eating and drinking oftentimes with publicans and sinners. His table talk changed the lives of hard-headed business men like Zaccheus and Matthew. He was just as much at home with poor men like that beggar in Jerusalem who was born blind. While He was with them it never occurred to them that they were poor. In His presence all hands felt that no man's life consists of the abundance of the things that he can buy. Life is made up of certain qualities of mind and heart and not of the things which men store up in barns or in banks.

He told His friends that being good was being like the birds and the flowers. "Consider the ravens," He said, "they neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them." The ravens were not made to sow

and reap. They do the things they were made to do. They are true to the law of their being. They function according to their own natures. They live out their ravenhood flying to and fro, keen of eye and swift of wing, seeking their meat from God, and in the great natural order which enfolds them they are fed.

"Consider the lilies," He said, "they neither toil nor spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was never so well dressed as one of these wild flowers." The lilies were not made to toil and spin. They do the things they were made to do. They are true to the law of their being. They function according to their own natures. They live out their lily-hood reaching down and claiming all that the soil has for them, looking up to receive all that the sun and the rain and the dew have for them, and so they are clothed with beauty.

"Do that," Jesus said. Do the things you were made to do. Be true to the law of your being. Function according to your own natures. Live out your manhood and your womanhood. Whatsoever your hands, your minds and your hearts find to do, do it well. Seek first the Kingdom of God and righteousness—that is what you were made to do. And when you are striving for self-realization along the line of the Divine Purpose for you, intelligently and conscientiously, you, too, will be fed and clothed. You will be fed indeed with the Bread that comes down from above and

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clothed with that righteousness which is the fine linen of the saints. The Master was always simple and natural in His method of being good. And that was one reason why men found Him interesting.

In the second place, His goodness was absolutely spontaneous. He lived at a time when the good people of the world were keen on rules and regulations. They had reduced righteousness to a science, as they believed, and it took a well-posted man to remember all the moves in the game as the Pharisees played it. There were thirty-three different ways in which men could break the Sabbath. There were fifty-seven varieties of mint, anise and cummin, which had to be carefully tithed. They had bound upon the consciences of men burdens grievous to be borne by their insistence upon endless details in the art of being good. Religion had become legalism; righteousness was an affair of rules. And the whole system had become as dull as a page torn out of a trigonometry.

Jesus set Himself against that whole method. "Except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, except your goodness becomes more interesting and vital than that, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." A good tree brings forth good fruit naturally, spontaneously, inevitably. It cannot otherwise. It does it just as a bird sings. Therefore, make the tree good and let the fruit come as it will—

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the fruit will be all right. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good deeds. He does it naturally, spontaneously, inevitably. Therefore, make the heart right and let the conduct come as it will. Love God with an honest heart, and love your neighbor as well as yourself, and then do as you please. With that sort of heart within, your own spontaneous action will be right. Love works no ill to anybody; therefore, love is the fulfilment of all law.

Now that sort of goodness is interesting and worth while. The rule-keeping sort is always dull and weak. The young man who is always thinking when he should put his right foot forward and when his left never becomes easy and graceful as a dancer—he can hardly walk across the room without falling over the flowers in the carpet. The young woman who is always trying to remember Rule 53 or Rule 97 in some “Guide to Deportment” or “Book of Etiquette,” never becomes a lady. She is not gaining that spirit of thoughtful, kindly consideration for others which is the essence of all good breeding. The people whose eyes are forever on rules of conduct graven on tables of stone rather than upon the temper and disposition of the heart never become genuinely good. The Master was intent upon a mode of goodness which should be vital.

When we read the story of the Master’s life it seems as if He went about thinking up new ways

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of being good. He was always striking out on lines of His own. If we had not gone so far toward making Him a stained-glass window, or a cold white marble statue, or a narrative in a book which most men seldom read—if we could only see Him as He was, flesh and blood, warm, real, alive, our hearts would leap at the sight of His goodness, as did the hearts of those men in Galilee. They were accustomed to the cut-and-dried style of goodness, but when they saw His method they cried out, “This of a truth is that prophet that should come.” They saw in Him what the nations had been waiting for during all those centuries. He was simple and natural, genuine and spontaneous, and when that type of goodness is lifted up in any land it draws men to it.

You have all read no doubt about the Bishop whose name was “Welcome.” His name fitted him—it grew out of him like his hair. Wherever he went he was just that, he was welcome. When he was first made a Bishop he found that the Bishop’s palace had in it sixty splendid rooms while the little town hospital across the street had only six. He visited the hospital first. “How many patients have you here?” he said to the head physician. “Twenty-six.” “Your beds are crowded and your rooms are poorly ventilated.” “Yes, your lordship,” replied the doctor, “but what can we do—we have no more room.” “There is some mistake here,” said the Bishop; “they

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have gotten these houses mixed up. It is perfectly clear to me that you have my house and I have yours. Restore me my own—your place is across the street.” So he had the sick people all moved over into the Bishop’s palace with its sixty rooms and he lived for the rest of his days in the little one-story hospital. That interested the people of the Diocese—they had never seen it on that fashion before.

It was said of him that as long as he had money in his pockets he visited the poor people of his Diocese that he might help them. When his money was all gone he visited the rich to ask them for gifts to help the poor.

He announced one Sunday that the following week he intended to go up into the mountains to visit some poor shepherds who were keeping their flocks in an out-of-the-way place. The mountains at that time were infested with brigands.

The Mayor of the town called on him that afternoon to protest against his going. “You would need an escort of soldiers,” the Mayor said, “and even then you would imperil their lives as well as your own.”

“For that reason,” the Bishop said, “I shall go without an escort.”

“Alone?”

“Alone.”

“They will rob you.”

“I have nothing.”

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“They will kill you.”

“A harmless old priest passing along muttering his prayers? What good would that do them?”

“What would you do if you met them?”

“I would ask them for alms for my poor.”

The Mayor saw that he could not do anything with such a man—he, too, had never seen it on that fashion. The Bishop set out the next morning with one small boy who had offered to go along to show him the way. He found the shepherds and spent the week with them, telling them about the goodness of God and administering to them the Holy Communion, which they had not received for years. And when he returned he brought with him a large treasure of gold, silver and precious stones which had been sent to him there in the mountains with this message pinned upon it—“To Bishop Welcome from Cravatte.”

Cravatte was the ringleader of the brigands! And when the Bishop was showing his treasure to his curate he said, “To those who are satisfied with little, God sends much.” “God,” the curate replied, “or the devil?” The Bishop looked at him long and searchingly and answered, “God.”

Now that is interesting! Bishop Welcome was like his Master. His life was the light of men. Wherever he went they saw their way about, and in that light they walked toward Heaven. His goodness was not the rule-keeping sort. It was simple and natural, genuine and spontaneous. It

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was the real thing, and when men saw it they glorified God.

What a tragedy it is where goodness is caricatured! Where it is made to seem dull and mean! Where men are honest because honesty is the best policy rather than from any real love of integrity! Where men are clean because they dread the consequences of doing what they would really like to do! Where they tell the truth because they are afraid of being found out as liars! Where they do an occasional good deed because it is pleasant to receive the applause of men! Where men caricature goodness in that way they become the enemies of the race. They are guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors against the Kingdom of God. They ought to be shut up somewhere until they learn better.

And those people whose goodness is thin, meagre and commonplace with never a splendid outburst of real generosity in it, with none of that moral venture which leads men to stake everything on loyalty to principle, with none of that uncalculating devotion to an ideal which makes a life winsome—how all this becomes a hindrance in the path of goodness! And worse than all, those would-be superior persons who go about thinking about how much better they are than anybody else, the moral prigs and spiritual snobs who stand up and thank God that they are not as other men are! How they injure the cause of

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goodness! They make us feel like saying something wicked.

But goodness seen as it is, goodness where it is simple and natural, genuine and spontaneous, goodness as it burned with a steady flame in the life of Bishop Welcome and shone resplendent in the life of Jesus of Nazareth—goodness like that is the most interesting and winsome thing on earth. It is the wine of life. It is the poetry of human existence. It is human action set to music and singing the same tune the morning stars sang together in that high hour when all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Now what can we do about it, you and I? What can we do to help to restore goodness to its rightful place of honor and of interest? I know of nothing better than to undertake to show the world some of our very own. The best service anyone can render to the cause of music is not to go about arguing until he is red in the face, trying to convince people that Beethoven and Wagner, Schubert and Brahms, were great composers. That does not accomplish anything. The best service he can render to the cause of music is to learn to play a little of it or to sing a little of it in such a way that people hear and feel the power and beauty of real music. Do it. Do it yourself. It is the only way.

The same principle applies to this more important interest of goodness. We cannot all learn

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to play, we cannot all learn to sing. We could not, if we chose, render the Fifth Symphony or the Overture to *Tannhäuser* in such fashion that the hearts of all who heard would be hushed and awed.

But we can learn to live, and being good is just that—it is living. It is living out one's real self and not some unworthy caricature. It is living out one's best self and not some poor third-rate substitute. "This do," the Master said, "and thou shalt live." The other mode of life is dying by inches or by yards, as the case may be. What those young men saw in the big city was not "life," it was death. "I am come that you may have life and have it more abundantly." When by the grace of God you are making your own life simple and natural, genuine and spontaneous in its goodness, you will enter into life to go no more out. And when you lift up that sort of goodness it will draw men to you and it will draw them to Him.

IV

How Old Are You?

WHEN Jacob learned that his son Joseph was still alive he went down to Egypt to visit him. While he was there, Joseph as a mark of respect to his father had him presented at court. And when the old patriarch stood before Pharaoh, ruler of the land of Egypt, the king said to him courteously, "How old art thou?" Jacob answered, "The years of my pilgrimage have been one hundred and thirty, and they have not yet attained unto the years of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." It was a gracious answer. It was a polite way of telling Pharaoh that he did not feel like an old man at all, even though he had lived a hundred and thirty years and that he thought he might be good for some years to come.

Let me ask you that question—How old are you? It is a personal sort of question. If I should go about pressing it upon people individually I might not meet with a very hearty response. Men as well as women show some reluctance about giving the exact figures, especially when the gray hair has begun to show above their ears.

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But I am not asking how long ago you were born—that would touch only the surface of my question. How much have you lived?—that is the real point of my inquiry! You cannot tell how much a man has lived by looking in the family Bible where the births of the children are recorded. Life is not measured solely by years. You must look at what you find written in the man himself. How much have you seen and heard and felt? How much have you loved and aspired and achieved in the depths of your own soul? How much actual experience of a worthy sort stands recorded opposite your name where the angels of God are writing all the time? Measure your life in that more intelligent way and tell me what you find!

The moment you undertake this more accurate appraisement you discover that life has various dimensions. It has length—that we all know and the length of a man's life can be easily stated in years and months and days, as in a funeral notice. But life may also have breadth and height and depth. However it may be in mathematics, there is a fourth dimension in human experience, and we must bear all these dimensions in mind when we undertake to ascertain how much anyone has lived or is likely to live in those years that lie ahead.

Let me speak first of the length of life. It is not the most important of the four dimensions,

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but it is not to be lightly regarded. A man must have some length of days, to achieve anything of value. The little child that is born today and dies tomorrow does not accomplish anything—it had no time to show its capacity for living. It was only a bud on the tree of life, which never opened into a fragrant blossom, to say nothing of reaching the stage of ripened fruit. It is impossible to do a day's work in ten minutes or a life-work in ten years.

And how many long-lived men have done their best work when they were past sixty—some of them when they were past seventy! Gladstone became Prime Minister of the British Empire three times after he was sixty years of age. He added immensely to his fame and to his usefulness by the ripened service of those later years. William Cullen Bryant wrote his famous translation of the Iliad when he was almost eighty. John Wesley, founder of the largest Protestant denomination in the English-speaking world, lived to be nearly ninety, preaching, writing, traveling, organizing, until within a few weeks of his death; and some of his best work was done in his old age. Lyman Abbott and Washington Gladden in those years which lie in the vicinity of eighty, were preaching with great acceptance to college students and writing leaders for the papers to influence the thinking of their fellow men, and pointing the way of social and spiritual advance for the

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nation. "With long life will I satisfy Him and show Him my salvation"—this was the promise made of old to the man who dwelt in the secret place of the Most High. The wise man plans for length of days that with ripened powers he may still bring forth fruit in his old age.

We may say all this heartily, yet the length of a man's life is only a secondary consideration. The long life is not necessarily an interesting or a useful one. There was Methuselah! The modern scholars tell us that the names of those long-lived old fellows in the Book of Genesis were probably the names of tribes rather than of individuals. However that may be, Methuselah will serve as an illustration. Here is the record of his career as it stands in Holy Writ,—"And Methuselah begat sons and daughters and he lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years and he died."

That is all that is said about him—apparently that is all there was to say. His life was a life of one dimension; namely, length. "He lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years and he died"—a long, narrow, uneventful, uninteresting life! No breadth of interest worth recording; no depth of conviction to be noted; no height of aspiration to place another worthy ideal in the sky of human desire! Nothing but length—nine hundred and sixty-nine years!

Suppose he did outlive all his contemporaries! Suppose he lived longer than any other man in

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history! Suppose he had lived to this hour—what of it! If he accomplished nothing worthy of being recorded save the fact that he had a family and lived a long time, then the full measure of years allotted him would only add to his disgrace.

How long did Jesus Christ live when He was here on earth? Not long, speaking after the manner of men. He was only thirty-three when they put Him to death on the cross. Methuselah lived thirty times as long. But how much did Christ live in that brief time?

He spent thirty of those years in mental preparation and spiritual discipline. No wonder the three years of which we know so much were great when we think of those thirty silent years of which we know so little standing behind them! Ten years of preparation for one of public service! Ten days of thought and prayer for one day of healing, redemptive action! Ten hours of silence for one of speech! How much He packed into those fleeting years of ministry to human need and of contribution to the cause of human betterment! How mighty those three years were in their holy and permanent influence upon the life of the race! His life was short but it was great. When men speak of Him they do not ask, "How long did He live?" but "How much." "In Him was life," life in all its dimensions and to this hour that life is the light of men. The length of any life is the least important fact about it.

2

When we come to the breadth of life how wide is that man you have in mind? We cannot tell by the use of a tape line. He may not be as broad as a barn door, yet he may serve. If he is a true man he has a certain breadth which must be measured in more vital fashion. What is the range of his interests? How far afield do his sympathies go? How many points of contact has he with the life of his city, his state, his nation? How broadly does he think when he reckons up the forces that make for or against human well-being? How many different forms of stimulus cause him to react?

Here is a man who prides himself on being a specialist. He emulates the spirit of that German scholar, who having given his entire attention to Greek nouns regretted on his death-bed that he had not specialized more strictly by devoting his whole life to the study of the dative case. This man I have in mind is ignorant of pretty much everything outside his own particular field. In that field of interest he is as bright and as sharp as a cambric needle, and as narrow. His eye will not hold anything larger than the fine thread of his own specialty. He has no taste for music—Beethoven and Wagner simply bore him; he cares no more for the Fifth Symphony or for the Overture to Tannhäuser than he does for a last year's bird's nest. He does not care for pictures—"Why should I tramp wearily through long galleries

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wearing out my legs and my eyes," he says, "merely to look at a lot of old saints and Madonnas and angels?" He is not interested in philosophy—Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Eucken and Bergson are to him simply "dull old chaps who never got their feet on the ground." He has no use for religion—to him "it is all up in the air," vague, uncertain, mysterious. He has narrowed his life to a single line of interest, losing out of it the fine quality of breadth.

Here is another type, the prosperous, self-made, self-satisfied man! He trots along the narrow tow-path of his own material success as if he had the universe at his feet. He thinks that a man's life does consist in the abundance of the things that he owns, a certain eminent authority to the contrary notwithstanding. He has never allowed his interest to be deflected from his own success by any sympathetic feeling for others. He says, "Charity begins at home," thereby excusing himself from any participation in the benevolent activities of the day. His charity begins at home and ends there in its own dooryard. He has fenced up his path until it is a narrow, meagre runway. If he were a man of any size he would be unable to squeeze through. He is more to be pitied than poor Methuselah for his own life lacks breadth and he will not be allowed anything like nine hundred and sixty-nine years of it.

How far those men are from the Kingdom of

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God! How far they are from the method of Jesus! His life was broad in its sympathies, wide in the range of its interest. He could sit at meat with Zaccheus, a rich man who had been dishonest and miserly, until the man of means was moved to say, "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man wrongfully I restore him fourfold." He could talk with the poor beggar who was born blind until his eyes were opened and the man was saying, "Once I was blind. Now I see." He could talk with Nicodemus, a master in Israel, until the man of culture was born anew. He could talk with those fishermen in Galilee until they said, "We never heard it on this fashion before."

Jesus was an all-round man, the Perfect, the Typal, the Representative Man. He was the Son of Man, the heir of all that is splendidly and eternally human. He said to His friends, "Love your neighbors as I have loved you." Love the man next to you. Love the man who needs you. Love the man on the Jericho road, who has been beaten and robbed—help him along to a place of safety and renewal. Let your sympathies leap over the barriers of race, of religious belief, and of social class until you feel your kinship with all hands.

Break down the walls which shut you off from those other fields of thought and action where your brother men are finding so much to enjoy. Brush away the silly social conventions which

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shut you up to an exclusive interest in your own set—all men and women are much alike when we get the feathers off of them! Form the habit of getting the other man's point of view—not always to adopt it, but to understand it.

If you are an employer make it your business to know what the labor unions and the socialists are talking about, that you may see the problem of industry from their angle of vision. If you are a wage earner seek to understand what difficulties the man who is a manufacturer or a merchant must face in the development and maintenance of a business which offers employment to hundreds of people incapable of organizing such a business themselves. This will make you a bigger, a broader, and a better man. You can look more intelligently upon your own things when you have learned to look also on the things of others.

You may be familiar with the doctrine of reincarnation as it is taught in some of the ethnic religions. They hold that when a man has finished his earthly course he may come back after death and be born again in this world in some other form. If he was rich when he was here, he may come back a poor man. If he had a fine social position, he may come back as a tramp. If he was an ignorant man working with his hands, he may come back as a college president. If he was an invalid or a cripple, he may come back

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with abounding physical vigor that he may know the joys and the temptations of that mode of life. By a whole series of reincarnations, twenty of them perhaps, he will at last attain to a fully rounded human experience. He will have taken all the courses, required and elective, in the big university of experience where the college colors are black and blue because the lessons are learned by hard knocks.

It is a fanciful idea,—we have no evidence that we were ever here on earth before or that we shall be here again. But it suggests a feeling that everyone has had. Every true man has wished that he might enter more thoroughly and more sympathetically into the lives of his fellows, especially the less fortunate ones. Messmates they are at the board of life, yet how little he knows of the inner motives, the longings, and yearnings of many of them!

I have wished many a time that I could leave my pulpit and go out and be a teamster or a street-car conductor for six months. I am sure I would come back better able to preach the Gospel of the Son of man to those men in the language in which they were born. I did belong for six years to the Central Labor Council in my city made up of representatives from the various labor unions. I represented the “Ministers Union” and I had a voice and a vote along with the carpenters, bricklayers, stone masons, the printers, plumbers,

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the painters and all the rest. It broadened me out until at the end of those six years I felt that an ell had been built on each side of my nature to accommodate the fresh supply of sympathetic interest.

Abraham Lincoln was only one man among the millions of men in this country in his day. From the hour when he was born in that log cabin in the State of Kentucky until the day he entered the White House, he was compelled to follow a somewhat narrow path. But when he really faced his life-work he was able to enter so sympathetically into the feelings of others, northern men and southern men, white men and black men, men who wanted "States Rights" and men who believed in the integrity of the Union, men who were for "peace at any price" and men who faced the stern necessity of Civil War—he entered so sympathetically into their feelings that it seemed as if the whole American people lived and moved and had its being in the heart of that greatest American. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gave him to see the right," he gathered up all these interests into the arms of his effort to the end that "government of the people, by the people and for the people should not perish from the earth." His life was not long—the assassin's bullet cut it short—but it was exceedingly broad.

In the parable of the sower some seed fell by

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the wayside where the ground was hard and it failed to grow. Some fell among thorns where the soil was overgrown with noxious weeds and it became unfruitful. Some fell where there was no depth of earth and because the soil was thin it withered away.

The sorry fate of this last bit of seed represents the failure of those lives which are shallow, superficial, all on the surface. They receive good impressions readily, and just as readily let them go. They live by custom, usage and the easy conventions of those who surround them. When they are in Rome they do as the Romans do. When they are in New York they do as Broadway does, even though that may mean a much less wholesome type of life than the one they put up in their own home towns. They rise or fall with easy unconcern to the moral level of those with whom they find themselves.

Their lives are thin. They have no depth of conviction rooting down into that which is vital and fundamental. They have no deep, underlying purposes and principles of action. They have no deep, sweet wells of feeling on which they may draw for wholesome impulse.

Off the coast of Labrador I have seen huge icebergs towering up three or four hundred feet in the air. I have seen them sailing due south in the teeth of a strong head wind. The gale was blowing from the south thirty, forty, fifty miles

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an hour, yet those icebergs sailed on toward the south without ever tacking. They had neither sails nor rudder by which they could tack. The secret of it lay in the fact that seven-eighths of the bulk of an iceberg is under water. The great Labrador current makes strongly toward the south. It gripped the huge bulk of those icebergs and bore them along no matter how the wind might blow at the surface.

Here is a life which is able to say what Jesus said, "I come not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me." The man has a sense of mission, of purpose, of deep underlying agreement with the will of God. The whole venture and process of his activities are embedded in a moral order. They lie secure in the will and purpose of the Almighty. The man has the power which comes from depth.

You will sometimes hear it said of a man—and it is high praise—"He is always the same." He may be traveling the high road of prosperity with flags flying and bands playing, or he may be walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Defeat. He may be standing in the presence of the rich or he may be in the humbler homes of the poor. He may find himself in an atmosphere charged with religious aspiration or he may be in the company of scoffers. He is never turned aside nor thrown down nor beaten back by any of these varying situations. He is always just the

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same—a simple genuine God-fearing, man-loving soul.

How does this man who is “always the same” maintain that fine poise and balance. His life has depth of purpose, of conviction, of feeling. He draws his supplies from the lower levels of his being where a man’s real life may be hid with Christ in God. He has the serene strength which comes from depth of life.

4
The height of a man’s life is not indicated by his present achievements. You cannot determine how tall he is by standing him against the door and measuring the deeds he has done or the actual attainments he has made in personal character. It is not what you have done, it is what you want to do and mean to do that tells the story. It is not what you are at this moment, it is what you want to be and intend to be some day that marks you up or down on the books of the Recording Angel.

I once heard a young Hindoo say in his broken English, “I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. But by the grace of God I am not what I was and I mean to be like Him.” There you have it! The real height of every man’s life must be measured by the upward, outward, Godward reach of his own aspiration and resolve.

Here is a man in the slums! He bears the marks of moral failure written all over him. He

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is stained by the coarse sins of the flesh. He has lied until his tongue is twisted; he has been dishonest so many times that his hand is like a claw. His mind is a cage of unclean beasts and his heart is a den for creeping things.

"How tall is that man, morally speaking?" you ask. I do not know. I cannot tell until I know what he means to do with himself. If he is actually saying in his heart what a certain moral failure once said in a far country, he may be towering up like a sequoia tree. If he is willing to confess his sins with no whimpering excuses; if he will stand out in the open saying, "I have sinned against Heaven and before men; I am no more worthy to be called a man; but I will arise and go to my Father," and if he is ready to stand up and go, putting evil behind him and putting his trust in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then I find in him an earnest and a promise of future growth which give his life the dignity and the height of spiritual worth. Measure every man not by his present achievements but by the upward, outward reach of his aspiration and resolve.

Give me your answer then before we go! How much have you lived—and what is more to the purpose, how much are you planning to live in those years which lie ahead? What are the measurements according to which you are laying out that spiritual edifice, that building of God,

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that house not made with hands, eternal in the realm of moral values?

Bring your materials and lay them on that foundation which has stood the test, for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid in Jesus Christ. Have in mind these four dimensions when you undertake to build. Live so that length of days may be yours if it please God—then you will not drop your task half finished. Open your heart on all sides to the needs and appeals of your fellow men, that your life may have the breadth which comes from a wide range of sympathetic interest. Have that depth of conviction and purpose which means stability. Then let your hopes reach out among the stars as you strive to wear at last the likeness and image of the Son of God. Live in that mood and after that method, that you may have life abundant, life eternal, life which is life indeed!

V

The Power of a Resolute Minority

WHEN the Israelites had escaped from Egypt and had reached the borders of the Promised Land they sent twelve men ahead to reconnoiter. These spies were to bring back a report upon the land the Israelites were sent to conquer. When they returned ten of them said that it could not be done, the difficulties in the way were too great. They counseled a retreat.

But the other two brought in a minority report. They believed that a splendid victory could be won by an immediate advance along the whole line. It was two against ten, but it turned out that the two had the right of it. Their judgment prevailed and the Israelites went in to conquer that country which they held and ruled for fifteen centuries. And when the victory was won the two men had the joy of knowing that their influence had turned the scale. It suggests the power of a resolute minority.

The twelve men all saw the same set of facts. This is the way their commission read, "See the land what it is, whether fat or lean, open or wooded. See the people that dwell therein,

whether they be few or many, strong or weak, dwelling in tents or dwelling in walled cities." "Get the facts," Moses said, "and bring them to me."

The twelve men all traveled together. They saw the same hills and crossed the same valleys. They saw the same walled cities and the same roving Bedouins in their black tents. They saw the same resources of the country stretching away on every side and the same obstacles to be overcome. It was identically the same situation which met the gaze of all those men.

Herein their experience is a leaf from the book of life. The world we live in, taking it by and large, is the same gigantic fact for all hands. The physical order which confronts you and me and him is the same big, solid fact for us all. The moral order which enfolds us, whether we like it or not, making the way of the transgressor hard and the way of the righteous the way of peace and honor, is the same unyielding fact for us all. The great God who looks down upon us whether we look up at Him or not is the same Almighty Fact for all hands. And we are sent out, as were the spies, into this complexity of facts and forces to make report upon what we find and to order our lives according to that finding.

It is altogether right that it should be so. "I go the way of all the earth," Joshua said. He took the middle of the road and accepted his full

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share of the common lot. It was the only way he could become the leader and servant of his day and generation. "He was tempted in all points like as we are," was said of a greater than Joshua. He also tasted the human situation, death included, for every man. In that way He became indeed the Typal, the Representative, the Perfect Man, the Son of man, able also to be the Savior of men. The only men who can "draw the thing as they see it for the God of things as they are" will be found to be the men who travel the main road and face the needs which belong to human experience in the large. The twelve men in this story were faced by the same set of facts and forces challenging them to do their best.

Ten of the twelve failed to see things in their right perspective. Here is the report they made! "It is a good land, an exceedingly good land. It is a land that flows with milk and honey. This is the fruit of it"—and they pointed to a cluster of grapes so large that to avoid crushing it they had carried it on a staff between two men. "But the people are strong, the children of Anak, the giants are there—we were like grasshoppers in their sight; and their cities are walled up to Heaven."

These men were scared, and when men are scared their souls shrivel up until they feel no larger than grasshoppers. They were moral cowards and when a coward looks at the difficul-

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ties in the way they seem to reach up to the very clouds of Heaven. So the ten men brought in an evil report of the land.

How true to life it all is! Every man gets as he brings. He sees in any situation what he has eyes to see. It is not so much a question of eyesight as of insight. It is the mind that sees and not the eyes alone. And the reaction which any set of facts produces upon any man is determined in great measure by his own powers of perception and appreciation.

Here were ten men who saw nothing except that which lay at the surface, and when they made their report they were all astray! When they added up their columns of figures they gave full place to the sons of Anak and the walled cities, but they left out of the account the might of moral purpose and the aid of the Almighty. That rendered their trial balance misleading. They had not eyes to see, nor minds to understand, nor hearts to feel the force of certain finer and more subtle forms of energy which were at work that day in the Land of Promise.

How many people there are who allow themselves to be driven off the field by purely material considerations! They see the Canaanites and the city walls, but nothing else. You will hear them pitying themselves as the victims of circumstances. "We are what we are by the operation of certain forces which we cannot control.

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Therefore, it would be better for us to have died in the land of Egypt where we were sure of our flesh pots." And the men who take this view of life go about with their hearts in their boots, feeling that they are no better than so many grasshoppers.

How many men are frightened out of their principles by some thoughtless majority! "Here is a situation," they say, "where it is ten to two, five to one, against the mode of life to which we were brought up." It must be that the ten have the right of it. It would be foolhardy to fly in the face of such a majority. They seem to forget that moral questions are never settled by a show of hands. They forget that you cannot state the real significance of many a situation in figures. The truth oftentimes is a matter of emphasis, of perspective, of atmosphere, and this cannot be conveyed in a column of figures. And mere statistics can be made to lie, like other things. If figures always dropped dead when they uttered falsehoods as Ananias and Sapphira did, the ten digits would have been buried long ago. There are any number of truths in human life which cannot be set down in rows of figures.

The men are foolish indeed who allow themselves to be crushed by the mere weight of numbers. The timid politician is afraid of a mob because it is big and can howl—he is more afraid of the mob than of his own conscience. The man

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in public life is more afraid of some yellow journal which claims the largest circulation and yells in headlines than of the verdict of those people of intelligence and character whose estimates really matter. The college man may be scared out of his own finer mode of life by some thoughtless bunch which indulges in coarse talk, loose conduct, and low intellectual standards. He is actually afraid to allow his own best self to stand out clear and firm. The boy in preparatory school may find himself in a group where it is ten to two against those principles to which he is most inclined. Thus numbers make cowards of us all and the pale cast of resolution is sicklied o'er by an array of figures.

"I was afraid," the man in the parable said, the man who had received but one talent. "I was afraid and I went and hid." If he had received ten talents and had been the most gifted man in the community, he seemed to think that he might not have crawled under the bed when the time came for him to show his colors; but because he was just an ordinary, everyday man with one fairly good-sized talent he had not the necessary moral fibre to be what he was and to do what he could do. "I was afraid and I went and hid"—and thus he lost his talent and his soul.

There are a few people in the world who are hypocrites because they are trying to appear better than they really are. There are not many

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of them—there are scarcely enough of them to leave what the chemist would call “a trace.” But there are many weak-kneed souls who are guilty of moral insincerity in not being willing to appear as good as they really are. The boy of sixteen is so afraid of being regarded as a moral prig that he leans over backward and does not appear to be as straight as he really is. The young man at college would sometimes rather be put down as fast or loose in his morals than to be known for the clean, fine, serious qualities of mind and heart which are truly his. In all such cases they are hypocrites, and I have the feeling that the man who is unwilling to be known for the best that is in him does more harm than the man who is trying to appear better than he really is.

The moral courage of that minority finally carried the day. It was not accomplished without struggle—the two men had a hard fight on their hands. When the ten made their discouraging report the foolish Israelites sat down and wept. “They cried all night,” the record says. “Would God we had died in Egypt! Would God we had died in the wilderness!” Would God anything had happened to us rather than that we be compelled to face these difficulties!

And ere long those moral cowards were all dead. They were killed off by the divine contempt. They were too anæmic to get through the winter. “It came to pass that the men who

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brought the evil report of the land died by the plague before the Lord, but Caleb and Joshua lived." The two men who made up the resolute minority lived on to fight their way through to a splendid success and to enjoy their full share of the Land of Promise.

Here is the report they made! "The land is an exceedingly good land, it flows with milk and honey. It is a land where one may eat bread without scarceness and not lack any good thing, and we are abundantly able to go up and possess it. If the Lord delight in us because of the purpose we cherish and the spirit we show, He will give us the land. Let us go up at once and possess it." They, too, had seen the giants, the sons of Anak, but even so they were not ready to put themselves in the grasshopper class. They, too, had seen the walled cities, but those mighty defenses in their eyes did not reach quite up to Heaven. In the face of everything they were ready to make an advance.

They formed a sounder judgment of the situation because they saw more. They saw everything between the ground and the stars, things material and things spiritual. They saw that it was not a mere squabble between a few self-seeking Jews on the one hand and a few tribes of corrupt Canaanites on the other. It was the attempt to secure a footing for that Hebrew nation which was destined in its unfolding life to take the right of

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the line in spiritual leadership for centuries. What a history lay ahead of those resolute men who brought in the minority report! Our Bible was written by Hebrews. Our Savior was a Hebrew, born in Bethlehem of Judea. Great issues were at stake and those two men of insight recognized something of the moral significance of their action when they called for an immediate advance.

It was no dare-devil spirit—they were men of faith. They believed in themselves and in their fellows and in God. They saw the red thread of moral purpose running through all human history. They saw the great divine intention underlying and overarching all our earthly activity. And there lies the difference between the ten who fail and the two who win out. The spirit of distrust causes men to shrivel up like grasshoppers while the spirit of faith makes them brave and strong. It was the spirit of faith which enabled Gideon and Barak, Moses and Samuel, David Livingstone and Abraham Lincoln, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson to work righteousness, subdue kingdoms and put to flight the armies of evil. God be praised for men who believe something—they are the only men who count!

Here were two men who were not whining about being the victims of circumstances! They had learned to stand erect with all their faculties at attention waiting for the word of command to

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go ahead. They "looked upward not downward, outward not inward, forward not backward," and were ready to lend a hand. They were masters of their fate, the captains of their souls. They faced the world undaunted.

"One who never turn'd his back but march'd breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dream'd, though right were worsted, wrong
would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

Such men in the fifteenth century before Christ, or in the twentieth century after, in Palestine or in Connecticut, are destined through the aid of Him who rules the issue to win the day.

Two men of the right sort in a store or an office can change the moral atmosphere and raise the tone of conversation to a higher level by allowing the best that is in them to stand revealed. Two men in a college class can change the spirit of that class by the fine quality of the principles they display and by the splendor of their ideals. Two boys in any group can put a new face on the whole situation by the genuineness of their own lives. The issue is decided by the power of the resolute minority faced right.

The victory of this high-minded group is assured by their sense of agreement with the will of

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God. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends" and when we are striving to shape them ourselves according to His wish, we have the sense of a great reinforcement. When we are working out anything worthy to be called salvation, God is working within us to accomplish His good pleasure. When any man is rowing his boat toward the haven where God would have him arrive, he has the wind and the tide with him doubling his effectiveness in every stroke he makes. With the sense of that Almighty Aid pledged to his advantage any man can face an adverse majority without flinching.

Here was Jesus Christ caring not a straw for the mere fact of numbers! He never gained a large following, even though He spake as never man spake. He chose twelve intimates and gave the best part of the last two years of His public ministry to training those men. He lived with them until they were saturated with His ideas and steeped in His spirit. They were branches of the true vine, projections of His own potent life. Then He stood up and pitted them against the full strength of pagan Rome. "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones," He said, in recognition of their powers of spiritual leadership. They never wore the purple nor had crowns on their heads, but they set in operation a process of spiritual renewal which was nothing less than regal.

You will find any number of situations where

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some hard task has to be done by a small number of men. There are difficult causes to be advanced. There are forlorn hopes worth fighting for to the end that they may become no more forlorn, but the earnest of coming victory. There are fellows made unpopular by some defect of manner or oddity in appearance but with splendid stuff in them, who need friends to aid them in realizing the promise of their lives. All the more honor to those who have eyes to see and are ready to put in their best strength to that end.

You will recall that story of Sodom. The city had become so foul in its morals that the Judge of all the earth proposed to destroy it, lock, stock and barrel. But it was suggested that perhaps fifty righteous men might be found in it, and that they ought not to be destroyed with the guilty. The Lord said He would spare it if fifty good men could be found there. Then the petitioner, realizing that good men were scarce in Sodom, asked if the requirements might be reduced to forty, and then he suggested thirty, and then twenty, and finally he brought the figures down to ten.

The Judge of all the earth intent upon doing right assured him that if even ten good men could be found in the place He would spare it for their sake. But even the ten good men were not forthcoming and so Sodom was wiped off the map by fire and brimstone. Ten righteous men

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would have saved Sodom! Ten righteous men placed at strategic points in the community will save any city. It suggests the tremendous significance of a resolute minority in active agreement with the Will of God.

Where will you stand, then, with the thoughtless majority which may be showing the white feather of moral purpose, or with Caleb and Joshua, men possessed of courage and ready for the great advance? You may be facing at this moment the obligation to live a clear-cut, definite Christian life, but the odds against you, so far as numbers go, are ten to two. What of it! The very difficulty of the undertaking offers the more effective challenge to your best powers of mind and heart. Why not stand with the saving remnant which is somewhere to be found in any community! Why not stand with the seven thousand moral reserves who have not bowed the knee to Baal, thereby becoming the hope of the nation! Why not link up your lives with Him who is able to bring us off from any field of effort more than conquerors! Then your way of life will be a steady advance into your appointed share of some splendid land of promise.

VI

Unconscious Influence

THERE was a man named Peter in the Early Church who had come to be known as an upright, downright, outright sort of Christian. He had done so many good deeds, he had spoken so many true and timely words, he was so simple, unaffected and genuine in his whole make-up that the people came to believe that his very shadow would do a man good. The humanity of the man was so warm and real that they invested it with a certain miraculous quality. "So they brought the sick people into the streets that at least Peter's shadow might fall on them as he passed by."

We are not told that any sick people were actually healed in that way. The record does not say. It was expecting a good deal of a shadow. But the very fact that they did it was a splendid tribute to the quality of the man. They believed in him and they felt that something subtle, magnetic, redemptive would emanate from him and reach those sufferers through his very shadow. It was their testimony to the silent, powerful contagion of a thoroughly good life.

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It was a form of energy which was entirely personal. It had not been organized into any kind of an institution. It had not been delegated to any sort of committee. I wonder if Peter ever served on a committee. If he escaped all that in his busy life he was in luck. It was just a reflection, a projection, so to speak, of Peter himself stretched out on the grass. It was broad with Peter's breadth. If he had been built on narrow, meagre lines, it would have been narrow and meagre. It was tall or short, according to Peter's own stature. It had in it all the lines and angles of Peter's appearance as faithfully as the sun could reproduce them. To all intents and purposes it was Peter himself spread out on the ground where the sick people were lying.

Now the most potent and lasting sort of influence is just like that. It is not so much what you say; it is not so much what you do—it is what you are that does the business. It is what you are when you are not saying anything or doing anything. It is what you are when no one is looking or listening. It is a certain atmosphere which you create and carry with you which registers its impress upon other lives for good or ill. It is a form of energy as silent and invisible as the power of gravitation—and in the realm of character building as mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of evil. Every man develops and maintains that personal some-

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thing which goes with him wherever he goes, laying its hand upon every life which comes within the length of his cable-tow.

The highest thing we know on earth is human personality. It is there that the likeness and image of God emerge. When any man is richly endowed in mind and heart we say of him, "He has a strong personality." "Have dominion," God said at the start to the human factors in His creation. "Have dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air, over the cattle and the creeping things." He knew that in every field of effort human personality would determine the issue.

Cæsar, Luther, Cromwell, Lincoln, these men made history! They changed the course of human events. They set the pace of progress. They gave shape and content to what had been without form and void. They did it by being what they were. By the vigor of their thought and by the strength of their wills, by the wide range of their interests and by the high quality of their principles they became creative. And that power of personality must be gained and held by each man for himself. It cannot be taught in a correspondence school, nor sent here or there by express. It is right there where the man is and nowhere else. Once gained it can be wielded for good or for ill, according to the moral purpose of the man, as the mightiest force in human affairs.

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We are told that Napoleon in his best days would, on the eve of every great battle, send for his marshals and have them come one by one to his own tent. There in silence he would clasp each man's hand, look into his eyes for a moment and let him go. He had not uttered a word, but it was enough. Every man of them went out ready to do and to dare and to die, if need be, next day for Napoleon. His shadow had fallen upon them, healing them of any lurking remnant of cowardice or any lingering uncertainty touching the victory they were to win. They felt as if they were all Napoleons and that their stars were in the ascendant.

In business and in politics, in the work of education and in the work of religion, it is personality that counts. And where a given personality is stimulating, wholesome, reliable, it gets results like those which the people of that early day were ready to ascribe to Peter's shadow.

The finest form of influence is also unconscious. Peter was not passing down street that day for the sake of casting a shadow. He had not even noticed that his shadow was there. He was going straight along about his business on some errand of usefulness, and the shadow came of itself. That was the beauty of it in the eyes of those who believed in him. If he had been thinking about it, if he had been saying to himself, "What a handsome shadow I am casting on the

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lawn! What a wonderful man I must be to have them carry out the sick and lay them along my path," they would not have done it.

People never lay their needs along the path of a self-conscious prig as he struts along. The man who poses as if he were forever having his picture taken will have his shadow all to himself—no one will want it. And those silly, affected people who are always thinking about the impression they are making and are trying to appear as something other than what they are become as uninteresting and as useless as last year's birds' nests. It is the unconsciousness of a life that loses all thought of itself in the service it seeks to render which gives it power.

There are forms of influence which are deliberate and intentional. The man means to do it—he is making a business of it. When some one seeks to influence you by instruction or persuasion, by the force of his argument, or by moral appeal, he is committing influence upon you in the first degree.

But that is only a small part of a man's influence upon the lives of others, and not the most important part. He accomplishes more when he does it unawares. More people are run over by street cars when they are watching a street car moving in the opposite direction than in any other way. It gets them when they are not looking. People are sensitive about being influenced. They

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are touchy about having anyone do them good, if he says so in advance. Those people who are so frightfully in earnest that they are always getting after you hammer-and-tongs for your soul's good make you feel as if you would like to swear. It is the influence which goes forth from a life unawares which accomplishes the finest result.

There came to Harvard University a famous preacher who caused the hearts of all who heard him to burn within them as he opened to them the Scriptures. When the service was over a very academic sort of professor undertook to discuss the minister's sermon with him, not very successfully. "But you preach, of course, to do good," the man said. "Heavens, no!" the minister replied, "God forbid!" His answer might seem strange. But what he meant was this—he tried to utter his truth clearly, concisely, cogently. He tried to live it himself so that he might certify to its reality in the depths of his own soul. Then he stood back and let that truth go forth and find lodgment, if it might, in the lives of men to accomplish there its natural result. And all his listeners had rights and reserves upon which he would not infringe. His method was sound. "Let your light so shine," the Master said, "that men may glorify the Father." Just let it! Be sure that what you have in you is light and not darkness and then it

will go forth of itself and men will see their way about.

We read here in the Old Testament of a man who had been on the mountain top. He had been moving on the highest level of thought and feeling he had ever known. He had been twenty thousand feet above the level of the sea where the people of his day were paddling about. He had seen God face to face and those everlasting principles of right and wrong which underlie all human well-being. And when he came down the mountainside from that august experience his face shone so that the people could scarcely look at him. The radiance of his countenance frightened them. "And Moses wist not that his face shone"—that was the secret of it. If he had been thinking about it, it would not have shone. It is the unconscious radiance of a life which has yielded itself utterly to the will of God and has lost all thought of itself in doing its work, which shows "the light that never was on sea or land."

"When thou doest thine alms sound not a trumpet before thee in the streets." When you send a ton of coal to a poor family do not hire a band to go along. The least bit of showy pride in one's generosity robs it of its beauty. Think so little of yourself when you are doing good that your right hand will not know what your left hand is doing. "And when thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites. They love to pray at the corners of

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the streets to be seen of men. Verily they have their reward." They pray to be seen of men and they are seen of men. They get what they prayed for and there is nothing more coming to them. The men who pray or give or live to be seen of men do it all for small pay.

One night at the college where I studied a senior was crossing the yard. It was late and he had spent his evening in a wretched debauch. He was feeling spotted and ashamed. As he crossed the campus he looked up and saw the oldest and best beloved member of the faculty sitting at his desk busily writing under the glow of an evening lamp. The young fellow knew that the old man was at work upon something which he believed would be useful to the world. And the contrast between that picture and the way he had spent his own evening smote him to the heart. Then and there he turned over a new, clean leaf and began to write upon it the record of a decent life. The old professor was not sitting there to be looked at; he knew nothing about that young chap out there in the dark; he had been so absorbed in his work that he had forgotten to pull down the shades. It was the simple unconsciousness of his useful action, as it was the simple unconsciousness of his useful life, which made him a power for good on that campus.

This finer form of influence is inevitable. When Peter walked out into the sunshine that day there

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was his shadow beside him. He could not get away from it. If he ran, it ran with him; if he slowed down, it still kept step; if he stood stock still, there was his shadow, sticking closer than a brother. He might have said as Luther said when his turn came, "Here I stand casting a certain shadow! God help me, I cannot otherwise!"

Now influence of the more potent type is just like that. You are always doing it whether you will or not. Men are warmed or chilled, they are lifted or lowered, they are made more responsive to the finer things of life or less, by the steady impact of your own life upon theirs. Whether they get hurt or help is determined by what you are. But something they must get.

The number of those who deliberately set out to injure their fellows is small. We have to reckon with them as we do with rattlesnakes and hyenas, but fortunately they are scarce. There is a multitude which no man can number of people who are steadily injuring others by being as they are. They are making it easier and more natural for others to be narrow and mean, to be selfish and uncharitable, to be unbelieving and irreligious. They are putting the weight of whatever influence they possess in the wrong pan, helping to tip the scales toward a less worthy mode of life.

Here is a group of college fellows or a congregation of men and women or a whole community of people! The Lord of the Vineyard desires the

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fine fruits of the Spirit from that entire group. The yield of fruit will depend upon the composite and prevailing moral temperature. And every life in the group helps to raise or to lower that temperature. The lives which are gross, sordid, material, breathing the atmosphere of ill will and devoid of aspiration are steadily sending the mercury down. The lives possessed by reverence, trust and kindness are sending the mercury up. The honor of the better result in the yield of spiritual fruit in that particular situation belongs to these lives and to the God they serve.

The Master was passing one day through a crowded street. It was like Broadway at five o'clock in the afternoon. The people were jostling Him on every side and He could scarcely move along. There came up behind Him a poor woman who had been sick for twelve years. She had spent all she had on doctors and was no better. She thought if she could only touch the hem of His garment she would get well. It was a blind sort of faith, the idea that she could be healed on the sly, without His knowing anything about it, by simply touching His clothes. It was blind, but it was real. And because her touch was the touch of faith and because He was robed in helpfulness the woman was made whole. Virtue went forth from Him inevitably at the touch of honest faith. In like manner men are rubbing off something from us in all these chance contacts of life.

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And it is possible for any life to be so dynamic in its sense of fellowship with God and in its kindly consideration of others that what is rubbed off will do good. We are meant to be branches of the True Vine handing on the help that was in Him.

It is only now and then that a man has a chance to influence deeply another life by direct effort, but these doors of involuntary communication stand forever open. The traffic in influence between life and life is like the traffic between the lungs of the animal world and the emanations of plant life. We exhale what they inhale. We inhale what they exhale. The carbon dioxide which we give off they take up, and that which they give off is for our good. This explains why it is good for us to get away from crowds of people into the woods. The same sort of give and take goes on between these lives of ours. The way a man walks down street with a strut or swagger or with the natural gait of a true man; the tone of voice he uses in discussing the weather or the war; the look he wears upon his face, sympathetic or otherwise; the very atmosphere he bears with him of kindliness or of selfish indifference—all these make a life fragrant or repellent. They determine the quality of that impact which everyone makes upon the lives of his fellows.

Two college men had returned to their Alma Mater to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of

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their graduation. They were going about the town when they saw one of their former professors on the street. He was an old man now and much broken. He was poorly dressed, for his salary had been small. He had never written a great book; he had never made an important scientific discovery; he had never been summoned to Harvard or Yale or Princeton to receive an honorary degree; he had never entered even the suburbs of what men call "the public eye." He had spent his whole life teaching Greek, which was almost as unpopular then as it is now. "What did you learn from the old chap when you were here?" one of these graduates asked the other. "I learned to be a man," was the quick reply, "and I shall be grateful to him as long as I live." He had probably forgotten all his Greek in forty years, but the imprint of that man's life was still there. Happy the professor, happy the individual anywhere who teaches a boy to be a man and starts him on a career of honor! It is a work accomplished mainly by the unstudied output of a man's soul.

When the Master was eating the Last Supper with His disciples, He said to them, "I have given you something." And He named it. It was not money—He had no money to speak of. It was not an appointment to high office—it did not lie in His power to set men on the right hand or the left hand of authority, as He was sometimes asked

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to do. He gave them something of more worth than all that. "I have given you an example," He said, "that ye should do as I have done."

And when those men looked at Him they knew that He had given them the best gift of all. In Him the word of right living was made flesh and dwelt among them full of grace and truth. The language of religion had been translated into terms of life; and the fact that it had been done became a standing pledge that something like that could be done again by the grace of God. He made goodness winsome and compelling in its power of appeal, so that wherever He is lifted up He draws men to Him. May grace be given us to make our lives so real and so true that the natural unstudied output of each life shall be a power for good!

VII

The Lessons of Failure

HERE was a boatload of men who were cold and hungry and cross, for they had been out all night fishing and had not caught anything. There the Master saw His opportunity. He came to them, not at the moment of some splendid success, but in the hour of failure. He reaches out His hand to many a life, not when it is on the crest of the wave, but when it is in the trough of the sea and liable to be drowned. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. "When I am weak," the Apostle cried, "then am I made strong" with a finer form of strength. And that is what I want to speak to you about this morning, The Lessons of Failure.

The men in the boat had been relying on their own strength. They were no tenderfeet, picking their way daintily around the Sea of Galilee for the first time. They were not amateurs, fishing as a kind of pastime while they were off on a summer vacation. Fishing was their trade; it brought them their bread and butter. They made a business of it.

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And they had wintered and summered with that old lake. They had fished it by day and by night and in all weathers. They knew every cove along its shores and every deep hole where the fish might lie. They knew all the best places to fish, for they had tried them out a hundred times. They knew what sort of sky was best for fishing, and from what quarter it was best to have the wind blow. You could not tell them anything about fishing in the Sea of Galilee.

They were prepared to resent it when this man from Nazareth, which was a small town ten miles back in the country, began to make suggestions to them about fishing. Peter said to him, "We have toiled all night and have taken nothing." What good would it do to "launch out into the deep" and let down their nets again! They were cold, hungry, and cross, as men always are when they have fished all night without results, and they did not want any advice from any quarter whatsoever.

How modern it all is! You will hear men today scorning the approach of those finer methods and ideals which come from Nazareth. "Business is business," they say—"You cannot mix religion with business." Human nature is selfish, and you cannot change human nature by an Act of Congress, or by a few intellectual flourishes. Do unto others as they would like to do unto you, and do it first. If you do not look out for Number One,

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who will? We know all about it; we have fished these waters by day and by night. We have been in business for forty years, and we have fought these labor unions and these uplift people to a finish over and over again.

These men are dead sure—dead is exactly the right word in that connection—that the Man of Nazareth cannot tell them anything about the way to carry on their business. “Launch out into the deep,” indeed—they think that they know more about the deep than He does.

Some of them will never learn any better until they have attended the school of failure. So long as they win out with their gospel of materialism they will believe that the race is to the swift, the battle to the strong, and victory for the man with the longest purse. They will remain as blind as Peter was that day at Capernaum. Until they have come through some long hard year of effort with empty boats and with empty hearts, they will not be ready to welcome the One from Nazareth, who shows men where to fish and how to live.

The Sea of Galilee is a small affair—it is only thirteen miles long, and you can see across it from shore to shore. But the sea of life reaches from Pole to Pole and far beyond. Its depth no man knows. And all along the shores of that vaster sea men and women are being beaten. They toil the whole year through and take nothing worthy of their effort. They go forth relying on

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their own wisdom, but the sea of life proves too much for them.

There was a man in the Scriptures who was down and out and did not know it. He did not know it because he was well dressed and had just eaten a good dinner. He said in haughty fashion, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Then the Spirit of God turned him inside out and showed him how he looked to those who had eyes to see. He was made to realize that he was "wretched and miserable, blind and naked." And in that hour of moral humiliation he was told to buy gold tried in the fire that he might be rich, and the white raiment of a new life that he might be clothed, and to anoint his eyes that he might see. The man who is tempted to settle down in lazy satisfaction with some meagre bit of success needs the sobering influence of failure to enable him to get his bearings.

In that hour of failure these men in the boat learned to walk by faith. The Master said, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets." They felt sure that it would be of no use. It was not the time of day to fish—night was the time to fish, and they had fished all night without catching anything. What could they expect in the broad glare of the sun! And they had fished in all the best places in the lake—it would be a waste of effort to try again in that spot to which He was pointing.

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It had everything against it—everything but His word. He asked them to do it, and as much to please Him as anything else they took up the same old net and let it down out of the same old boat into the same old sea where they had failed. And now they caught so many fish that they could scarcely land them—they all but broke their nets. They were taking their first steps in learning to walk by faith.

We have tried and failed; nevertheless at Thy word we will try again. That is the method whereby the most satisfying successes in life are won. Where the exercise of your own judgment in putting forth your strength has left you with an empty boat and an empty heart, try it again in His way. Launch out and let down your net for a draft of something which you have not found as yet. It is there, and He knows that it is there, and He knows that you need it beyond anything else. And all your shrewd sayings about “Business is business” will not fill your nets nor fill your life with peace and joy, unless you learn to use your strength at His word.

The Germans got into all this mess because they knew it all. They brought upon themselves this frightful national disaster; they have lost all chance for any real place in the sun for the next hundred years; they have plunged themselves into a depth of moral contempt in the eyes of the whole world from which they may not emerge for cen-

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turies, because they were so cocksure. No one could tell them anything about "might and efficiency." They knew where to fish and how to live. They had "the will to power" and they would promptly fill their boats with the best there was in all the seven seas.

Now look at the results of their philosophy of life. They have toiled for thirty years in preparation for "The Day," and they find themselves with empty boats or with no boats at all, with an empty treasury and an empty soul. And their sorest need today is not for men or for money, for munitions or for mines—it is to learn the meaning of this statement, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," do men gain their real success.

You may find yourselves in some situation where it is "experience versus faith." It was so with this boatload of men. When they made their first venture, they were relying upon their own skill and experience as fishermen, upon their knowledge of the sea, and upon the strength of their right arms. They were as confident as the Kaiser was in 1914, yet they came back with an empty boat.

When they made their second venture, they had nothing but the sense of humility consequent upon their failure and the spirit of obedience to the Master's word—and this time they came back with a boatload of fish. "At Thy word we will!"

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The plain straight act of obedience to His will was of more worth than all their strength and skill.

“He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken unto a wise man.” Human judgment walks by sight and because its eyes are holden, it brings up many a time in the ditch. The spirit of obedient trust walks by faith, and because it walks with Him it walks with sure tread in the way that goeth upward.

The Man from Nazareth showed them that day that He knew something about fishing. He knows something about farming and about business. He knows something about politics and about the affairs of nations. His word of counsel and His high command are the best assets to be had in any of these great interests. He knows the sea of life—He has sailed it in all weathers, tempted and tested at all points like as we are. He knows the deep places where the rich values in human experience are to be taken. He knows how to fill men’s hearts with that which is life indeed. You can afford to stake your all upon obedience to His high command.

If you want a fine word to inscribe on the flag which flies from your masthead as you sail the sea of life, take this one—“At Thy word, I will.” When you take that line you are not leaning upon your own understanding, you are committing your way unto the Lord that He may direct your paths. You are not depending upon your own unaided

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strength, you are conscious that underneath and around you are His everlasting arms which will not let you fall. You are saying what the Master said in that hour when the shadow of the Cross was falling upon His pathway and the Roman soldiers were approaching in the dark—"I am not alone, the Father is with me." With that fine purpose in command as you sail out, your ship will not go upon the rocks, nor will it return from its voyage empty. It will come back laden with the precious cargo of a more abundant life.

These men learned their lesson by trying again at the very place where they had failed. They were not called away from the scene of their defeat to some other lake where the fishing was better. They tried again with the same old net, in the same old boat, and in the same old sea. But they did it now at His word and they did not fail.

Any boat will do, if you launch it at His command. Any sort of a net will do, if you let it down in the place He indicates. Any hour of the day will be a good time to fish, if He is there co-operating with you. It is not a change of location nor a fresh supply of tackle which most men need for a higher success, but a change of heart.

The place for any man to get up is where he fell down. There was Zaccheus, the richest man in Jericho. He was little in stature, and little in every other way. His two most glaring faults as we gather from the context were these, he was

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dishonest and he was stingy. These qualities had helped to make him the richest man in town.

When the Master sat at meat with him, revealing him to himself, Zaccheus saw the door by which salvation must come to his house. "Lord," he said, "if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I will restore him fourfold; and the half of my goods I give to the poor." He had been dishonest and stingy and now the first two words he utters as a renewed man are "restore" and "give." He begins to get up at the very point where he had fallen down.

We are not surprised when bad men fail and fools go down in defeat. But sometimes good men fail and wise men meet with the sorest kind of disaster. The sea of life has been too much for them and they have toiled for years with nothing to show for it. At such a time some of them feel impelled to run away under cover of darkness to some distant spot of earth, and some of them in cowardly fashion take their own lives, and are seen no more on any spot of earth.

It is a poor use to make of such an experience. It is tragic where men refuse to reap the harvest of a failure bravely met and nobly borne. "The foolish make of their failures graves wherein they bury all their highest hopes. The wise make of their failures ladders whereby they climb toward Heaven." Right here where you met your Waterloo is the place for you to show that "greater is he

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that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city."

In the Yale School of Religion we had one year a vigorous young fellow from a far Western state. He was earning his own way, and he was an excellent student in every sense of the word. He had an older brother who was in business for himself in a modest way. This brother was unfortunate in some of his ventures, and presently found himself with two thousand dollars more liabilities than assets, and certain obligations which had to be met without delay. He saw no way out of it, and he wrote to the young theolog that he would have to make an assignment and take refuge in bankruptcy.

Then our young chap, who was no lath-and-plaster saint, but quartered oak, wrote back, "We will not have any bankrupts in our family—we are not that sort. Turn over all you have to your creditors, and then you assume one thousand dollars of that indebtedness and work it off, and I will take care of the other thousand." He wrote shorthand and used a typewriter, and had other strings to his bow. During his middle year in the seminary he supported himself, carried full work with high grades and earned on the side eight hundred dollars of that indebtedness. The following year he cleared off the balance, and those two brothers faced the world with their heads up. He was preparing for the work of the Christian

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ministry, and this was part of his preparation. When he begins to preach his word will be with power and his life will give light to men.

“Stay in your boat,” the Master said to the men who had toiled all night and failed. Stay right there in your boat, but “launch out into the deep.” You have been fishing too close to shore. You have been seeking “safety first” rather than obedience to His high command. You have been fishing in shoal water catching minnows when you might have been doing business in the great waters of spiritual experience. Launch out again upon the very same lake, but in that deeper water let down your nets.

Here are students in high school or in college fishing along the edges of a great opportunity! They have a splendid chance, but they are allowing it to slip by without utilizing it. All the mental and moral unfolding they are getting might be compared to a small mess of sardines.

You long to say to them, “Launch out!” Enter more profoundly into the meaning and power of these educational facilities which are at hand! The purpose of education is not to pack a lot of undigested information into a man’s head, or to hang a Phi Beta Kappa key on his watch chain, or to write certain letters after his name indicating his degrees. All this is mere frill and ornament. The purpose of education is to make each man more heavily responsible for the welfare of his

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own community. It is to develop in each one a sense of personal adequacy to those demands which society has a right to make upon him, and to establish him in the spirit of readiness to make response in terms of useful, competent action. Launch out where the water is over your head, and let your education count for something worth while.

Here are men and women in mature life, who are conscious of a certain mental poverty! They manage to look over a great deal of print in the course of each week, but you could scarcely say that they have learned to read. When they undertake to apply their minds to the more serious, vital interests of life, they lack insight and grasp. When they think they do not seem to produce anything. When they talk there is a certain emptiness and futility about it all.

They, too, have been fishing in shoal water. If they would cast overboard the principal part of that cargo of "reading matter" which was never worth printing and is not now worth reading, and launch out into some real concern with the more vital truths, they would be amazed at the result. It was One who spake as never man spake who gave us this challenge: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy *mind* and with all thy *strength*. I am the Truth, and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."

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Here are multitudes of men and women who are paddling to and fro in the shoal waters of religious interest! They are not infidels—they have some small measure of religious faith. They are not indifferent to religion—they attend church on pleasant Sundays when nothing better offers. They have a mild desire to be useful in their day and generation, if it does not involve too much inconvenience. Their religious life is not insincere, but it is superficial. It has no depth of conviction; no deep underlying sense of agreement with the will of God; it does not uncover to them the deeper sources of motive and stimulus. They have never tried to think their way through to a clear-cut, definite, religious faith, or to enter into the power of heartfelt worship, or to show a resolute effort to make the principles of the Master the guiding principles of their own lives.

You long to say to them, "Launch out into the deep upon that sea where you have failed. Seek to know what David and Isaiah, what Jesus and Paul had to say about life! Lay hold upon your full share of that inheritance, undefiled, uncorruptible, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for those who are kept by the power of God."

Religion is not a mere form of words nor a mere set of observances to which we may now and then turn aside, nor a mere supply of small change in kindly acts of service. Religion is life, life abun-

dant, life eternal, life without limits in its capacity for advance.

Twenty odd years ago I was making the trip through Palestine on horseback with a group of friends. We camped one night at Capernaum there on the Sea of Galilee. We had Sea of Galilee fish for breakfast next morning. When the rest of the party started on that day on the road to Damascus, I tarried behind. I had been riding for days in the dust and heat, and the thought of a swim in the cool, clear water of that lake was most attractive.

I tied my horse to a sycamore tree something like the one Zaccheus used in Jericho. Then I made ready and swam out into the lake. I thought of Peter and James and John fishing in those waters. I thought of the Master as He walked along the beach and called to them in the hour of their discouragement. And it all seemed so near and so real! I swam ashore and dressed, and there in the quiet of that morning hour, with no one near but Him, I knelt down and prayed that I might become a more competent fisher of men. It may not have been the result of that single prayer, but I know that when I returned to my field of labor in this country there was in my ministry a deeper note.

Here we are, then, setting forth in our little boats upon the sea of life! There beneath the surface, hidden from our eyes, are treasures in-

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numerable. They are meant for us. It is not His will that any life should remain empty and futile. I care not how many times you may have prayed when it seemed as if the heavens were brass. I care not how many times the burdens of duty laid upon you have been so heavy as to make you stagger. I care not how many times you have been tempted and have failed. There is something better in store for you and for me and for all hands.

We may have toiled all night, all the year, all through a decade, without taking anything which satisfied our desires. Nevertheless, at His word launch out where the water is deeper and the issues greater and give it another try. If you make your supreme attempt in the spirit of reverent trust toward Him, with a feeling of intelligent good will toward all your fellows, and with an honest desire to gain that which will be best, you will not fail.

VIII

The Men Who Make Excuse

THERE are two sorts in the world, the men who do things and the men who are always ready with elaborate explanations as to why they did not get the things done. The world frankly prefers the first type—it saves its highest honors for them and steadily puts the other sort into the discard. It is for every one to make up his mind as early as possible with which group he proposes to travel.

Here is a short story told by the Prince of Story Tellers, who “spake many things in parables,” showing the folly of attempting to palm off on the world the shoddy of excuses in place of the all-wool of genuine achievement. He was being entertained in the home of plenty and this story was part of His table talk. He had just indicated in a telling way the duty of the strong to the weak. “When thou makest a feast do not always invite your rich neighbors who will naturally invite you again.” Do not always invite those who already have more than enough to eat—invite the poor who have less.

The situation at once became somewhat

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strained. The people at that dinner table were not accustomed to such plain talk. There came one of those painful silences which sometimes befall a dinner party when something too real and searching has been said. Then one of those smiling individuals who always carry a good supply of small change and pious platitude came to the relief of his host. He filled up the awkward gap in the conversation by saying, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God."

No exception can be taken to this statement as a general proposition. But the Master was not accustomed to do business in the shallow waters of platitude. He at once launched out into the deep and let down his net for a draught of something vital. He told them a most unlikely story of a rich man who made a great supper and invited many guests. The invitations were all accepted apparently, but when the time came the guests began to beg off with the most absurd sort of excuses. This is not the way of the world—it is not the way people ordinarily treat invitations to great suppers or to the marriage feast of the king's son. And it was by this improbable picture of human action that Christ sought to show the folly of those who, having the privilege of becoming the chosen guests of God, refuse the call.

The invitation was an act of grace. Any honest invitation is just that. The man who invites you to dinner does not have to do it. He

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does not expect to get anything in return for it—if he did he would not be exercising the grace of hospitality, he would simply be doing a little business with you. If you should offer at the close of the evening to pay him for your dinner he would be amazed and grieved. His invitation springs from an unselfish interest in your comfort and pleasure. “Come,” he says, “for all things are now ready! The fatlings are killed and the dinner is on the table.” All you have to do is to enter into the full enjoyment of the best that has been prepared for your coming.

Here the invitation to the supper stands as a symbol of that broad summons of the Father in Heaven. He invites us all at this hour to enter into loving fellowship with Him and enjoy the best that He can provide. Come, for all things are now ready—all things that belong to man’s highest estate, to the full realization of his own powers, and to the rendering of that service which will make him an honored and useful member of society. It only needs the personal acceptance and co-operation of each individual. And the acceptance of that invitation through the dedication of one’s powers to the highest he sees constitutes the very essence of Christian character. When any man does that the Giver of the Feast begins to feed him with the Bread from above and to drink with him His own wine new in the Kingdom of God.

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But the men in the story allowed things legitimate and praiseworthy to stand in the way of their supreme loyalty. "They all with one consent began to make excuse." The first man said, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it; I pray thee have me excused." Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and I must go and prove them! I pray thee have me excused." And a third said, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come."

Now, none of these interests is evil—they are all good. It is highly desirable that men should own land, and that farmers should purchase oxen, and that young men should marry wives and be devoted to them. It was not as if one had said, "I am planning to go out and get drunk that night—I pray thee have me excused!" Or as if another had said, "I have arranged to rob a bank in the next town that night, therefore I cannot come." Or as if a third had said, "I am purposing to go out and burn the buildings of my rival in business that night; therefore I shall not be there." It was not a series of crimes which led to the moral failure of the men in the story—it was their preoccupation with interests entirely legitimate which crowded out that which was of supreme importance.

Let me put it in modern terms! Here, in any community you want to name, are people who mean sometime to be noble, high-minded Chris-

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tians, only they have not quite gotten around to it as yet. They have been busy with a number of other things, the movies, the newspapers, the games of bridge that have to be played. Now these side issues which I have named are not evil. The movies for the most part are entirely innocent—the only thing to be said against them is that they are so deadly dull as a rule. But when young people fall into the habit of going once every day and sometimes twice a day in order to see all the reels which are brought to town, thus spending a vast amount of time in a cheap and easy form of diversion where all that is required is that one should sit and look, they become a menace to interests more vital.

It is desirable that everyone should read the newspapers in order to know what is going on; and the great mass of that which is printed is not morally hurtful. But when this lighter form of intellectual effort, which engages only the surface of one's mind, crowds out the reading of books which deal with matters in a more serious and vital way, then the papers become a nuisance. Sometime, somewhere, everyone who has a head on his shoulders and not merely a place to wear his hat ought to learn to think. The hasty skimming through a lot of newspapers does not encourage thinking. And the game at cards as a means of relaxation from a hard day's work has its place. It is a loss where people fall into the

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way of spending all their leisure hours in counting black and red spots. In every such case the less may crowd out the greater.

Here in the story the good became the enemy of the best. In real life the choice as a rule does not lie between the best and the worst. If a man has sunk to that level where he considers the worst as a possible option, the best is no longer within his reach. Men are constantly choosing between things which are good in their way and that best line of effort which has the right to command one's final allegiance. The boy in school who manages to "pass"—he is not actually sent home in disgrace—and contents himself with that, leaving the higher levels of mental and spiritual efficiency unreached; the mature man who does something which "gets by," as he says—it may hit the doorposts on both sides but it squeezes through; the line of conduct which does not land a man in the police court or in open scandal, but never gains anything worthy to be called character—all these have failed by allowing the good to become the enemy of the best.

Here in the Bible was a soldier who in the midst of a great battle was set to guard an important prisoner who had been captured. That was his particular business in connection with that battle. But when the king came the prisoner was gone, and all the soldier had to say for himself was this, "As thy servant was busy here and

there he was gone." There were a dozen different things which he thought he might do. None of them were evil things—he was not going over to the enemy or showing himself a traitor to his country, but somehow in giving attention to these other interests the supreme thing went undone. As thy servant was busy here and there with a little of this and a little of that, lo! the prisoner he was set to guard escaped.

The young man in a military camp is there to be trained as a soldier—if he fails in that, he fails. The young man in college is there to gain that mental and moral unfolding which changes a boy into a man—if he fails at that point he fails. The boy in preparatory school is there for that discipline and development which will fit him thoroughly for the harder duties which lie ahead—if he gets by without accomplishing the main purpose of those years he goes down in defeat.

This was the answer Jesus gave to that pious humbug who uttered his platitude about the blessedness of eating bread in the Kingdom of God. He said to those men who sat at meat with him, "How much do all these truths about religion mean to you? Are you taking your religion seriously? Is it anything more to you than a form of words on your lips or a set of graceful observances to which you may turn aside? Are you willing to make sacrifices in the matter of land and other property interests or in the enjoy-

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ment of your home comforts in order to serve God in His Kingdom? Unless you are ready to put first things first and subordinate the lesser interests to the demands of character and service, you are all humbugs."

The way of advance does not lie through the destruction of those interests but in their consecration. The man whose life is ample and varied is not asked to destroy his advantages. The one who has five talents of personal ability has five times the capacity for usefulness over the man of one talent whose life is meagre. He had best not throw away four-fifths of his ability in order to put himself on an equality with his less fortunate fellow. He had best devote those talents to the high ends they are meant to serve.

In the long run the way of renunciation is easier and less creditable than the way of consecration. It is easier for a full-blooded man to starve himself by an ascetic mode of life and thus avoid the coarse sins of the flesh than for him to remain full-blooded, keeping himself fit and bringing all those splendid powers into obedience to the spirit of Christ. The latter, however, is the harder and holier line of action.

It would be easier for many a rich man to give away all of his money to the poor than to keep it and administer it in a thoroughly Christian way by investing it in enterprises which yield him a livelihood and furnish many other people the same

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chance to earn their livings in honest employment. The way of use and consecration, however, is a finer way than that of renunciation and destruction.

Here is a man who builds a factory and conducts it in such a way that the smoke which pours from the tall chimney is a black flag of piracy. He is robbing men and women of the better wages they ought to have, and robbing them of their manhood and their womanhood by making the conditions of their toil unjust and inhuman. He may make shoes or guns or steam engines, but he is not making manhood or womanhood for those whose lives are bound up with his own in that enterprise. Here is another man who builds a factory and operates it in such a way that the smoke from the tall chimney is a pillar of cloud by day, guiding all those other lives toward the Land of Promise in the spirit of good will. And this consecration of his means to good ends becomes the harder and holier mode of life.

“Live then,” as William DeWitt Hyde of Bowdoin used to say, “in the active voice rather than in the passive, thinking more of what you can do than of what may happen to you. Live in the indicative mood rather than the subjunctive, concerned with facts as they are rather than as they might be. Live in the present tense, concentrating upon the duty at hand without regret for the past or worry for the future. Live in the

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singular number, seeking the approval of your own conscience rather than popularity with the many. Live in the first person, criticizing yourself rather than condemning others.” And inasmuch as you must have some verb to conjugate in your everyday life you can not do better than to take the one we used both in Latin and in English—*amo*, I love. I live in the spirit of good will toward God and men in the use I make of all these gifts of His grace.

The man who bought the piece of ground could have postponed his visit to it until the next day—it would have looked all the more beautiful to him had he first discharged his duty by being present at the feast to which he had accepted an invitation. The man who went to try his yoke of oxen might have hitched them to his cart and have driven them to the supper—it was before the days of rapid transit. The man who had married a wife might have brought her with him—if she was any kind of a wife the feast would have been all the better for having her there. In every case the natural, wholesome, legitimate interests of anyone’s life had best be not cut out nor lopped off, but brought in as part of the total service to the cause of human well-being.

When these men refused the invitation the opportunity passed. The master of the house, when he received those silly excuses, said to his servant, “Go out into the highways and hedges

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and bring in the poor, the lame and the blind." They would not be so occupied with their land, their oxen and their home comforts that they would be unwilling to come. "Let my house be filled with guests but none of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper." The feast went on, but without those men who had refused the call. The door of opportunity opens but it does not stand forever open—when men pass by the door is shut.

Here in a short poem the author puts these words on the lips of his principal speaker, whom he calls Opportunity.

"Master of human destinies am I,
Both fame and fortune on my footsteps wait,
I knock unbidden once at each man's gate.
If sleeping wake, if feasting rise
Before I turn away.
It is the hour of fate."

The scientific men tell us that in the development of every unfolding life there comes a time for the marshalling of cells for the building of certain tissues and the forming of certain organs. If the work is not done at that time it can never be done again and done right. If that period passes without the proper development of those organs the life is born imperfect or deformed. In the case of a human life there may come a surgical

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operation to correct so far as may be what grew wrong in the first place. But the organism will never have the strength and symmetry it was meant to have.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men," morally as well as physically, "which taken at the flood leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of that life is bound in shallows and in miseries." There is a time for the formation of Christian habits of thought, Christian modes of feeling, Christian lines of action. Do it then, for it can never be done so well again. There is a time for the cultivation of that temper and disposition which make for character of the highest sort. Seize your chance with both hands and compel it to yield the best it was set to bring. It is the voice of Scripture and of experience and of God, which says, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Do it now, for tomorrow may be too late.

In that great day when the Son of man gathers the nations before Him and separates them as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, some people will be standing on the right hand. They will be possessed of Christian character. They saw their chance and made the most of it. And they will hear the words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Ye did it unto Me." Other men will be standing on the

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left hand without that Christian character which might have been theirs. They will stand there offering their excuses. "Our parents were so strict with us when we were children that we were turned against religion. We were made to go to church so much in our youth that when we grew up we hated it. We met some church members once who were hypocrites"—as if there were no hypocrites in the world outside of the church where they stand. "If we had understood all the mysteries connected with religion, we might have become Christians"—as if no one could ride on a trolley car until he understood all the mysteries connected with electricity. And in that day neither God nor man will feel much sympathy for those who undertake to make excuses take the place of results. The word to them will be, "Depart, ye did it not to Me."

When Lord Kitchener was in Egypt one of his subordinates came to him to explain why a certain order given the day before had not been carried out. There were any number of reasons, he said, why the thing could not be done. Kitchener listened for three minutes and then cut him short by saying, "Your reasons are excellent. In fact, I think they are about the best reasons I ever heard. Now go and do it and report to me tomorrow morning that the work is complete." When the sun rose next day the thing was done. He was a man who never excused himself nor

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others and he will go down in history as “Kitchener of Khartoum, the man who did things.”

“Be ye, therefore, doers of the Word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves.” “Not everyone that saith unto Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in Heaven.” “Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of My God to go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God to indicate of what sort of stuff he is and the name of the city of My God to indicate where he is to dwell, and I will write upon him My new name.”

IX

The Power of Sentiment

HERE was a full-grown man who was homesick—he was homesick for the joys of his youth! He was a man of affairs who had written the word SUCCESS over against his name in capital letters. He was the king of his country and the greatest king that Israel ever had. But here at the close of a long, hot day he was thirsty and he found himself longing for a drink of water from the old well on his father's farm. "O for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem by the gate." He had played around that well as a boy. He had drunk from its cool depths on many a sultry afternoon. Now in his maturity he longs for a drink of water which would taste as that water tasted when he was a boy.

You know the feeling. You may have wished that the coffee this morning would taste as it did when your mother made it. You may have wished that Christmas and the circus and things generally would produce in you once more the old thrills of delight. Now, as a matter of fact, the water and the coffee, Christmas and the circus, have not

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changed except for the better. But you have changed—you and David. The fresh, unjaded appetite of the boy is gone. The keen zest and relish for some forms of experience are no longer yours. Your sensibilities have been blunted by the passing years, and that is the reason why a drink of water from the well no longer tastes like the nectar of the gods.

But David's longing went deeper than the contents of a well. The water was only an outward and physical sign of an inward and spiritual satisfaction which he craved. He longed for the innocence and radiant serenity of his unstained youth. He wished that he might find himself again a shepherd boy keeping watch over his flock and singing, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." He wished that he could feel again the joy of striking down that Philistine giant with sling and stone and hear again the plaudits of the soldiers. He wished that he could see himself coming up again from the sheepfold to be anointed king of Israel. In those great days his life was all unstained by serious wrongdoing. It was sound and clean—it sang as the birds sing in the trees.

Now he had sinned grievously against God and man. He had been guilty of murder and adultery. He had a load upon his heart which even the divine mercy had not removed. You can feel the heart-ache in those words which fell from his lips, "O

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for a drink of experience from the well of boyhood
which is by the gate."

As one of our own poets has it,

"Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

"Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is gone
Will never come back to me."

He was homesick. He wished that he could turn back the files of time and live over again those early years. He would certainly avoid the folly and the wickedness which had brought him pain. Half aloud and half to himself, he says, "O for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem." Three of his soldiers, mighty men of valor, heard him, and then the rest of the story follows as you all know it. Let me hold it up before you as a picture which sheds light upon the power and value of wholesome sentiment.

The three mighty men did a brave deed because they loved their king. They stole out that night through the enemy's lines, taking their lives in their hands, for the Philistines would have killed them on the spot had they been discovered. They went on through the enemy's country under cover of darkness until they reached the old well

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in Bethlehem. They drew out of it a jug of water and brought it back by the same perilous route until they delivered it into the hands of the king. They ventured everything on the strength of a sentiment which they cherished toward the ruler of their country.

It was not a very sensible thing to do when we come to think of it. They might have been killed, and the lives of three good men are worth more than a jug of water from any well on earth. "It showed a lack of common sense," I hear some practical man saying to himself. But man does not live by common sense alone—if he tries to do it he dies in certain areas of his nature. The considerations of prudence may point to a certain conclusion as solid and verifiable as the statements of the multiplication table and as powerless to move the heart to its higher levels of feeling and purpose. The finger of expediency may indicate a certain line of action as clear and plain as the North Star and as coldly remote from human well-being. We are hearts as well as heads. We are hearts even more than we are heads. "Out of the heart are the issues of life," for men and women do mostly those things which they feel like doing. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and the man who roots out all sentiment from his life to make more room for the chilly dictates of expediency has made a sorry trade.

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“The night has a thousand eyes
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the whole world dies
When the sun is gone.

“The mind has a thousand eyes
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.”

Keep, therefore, thy heart with all diligence! Keep it filled and charged with tender devotion and joyous enthusiasm, with gracious longings and high resolves, for out of it are the issues of life.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men came from the East. And when they found Him with Mary, His Mother, “they opened their treasures and presented Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.” The gold was all very well—it could be used to purchase something for a family so poor that they were compelled to sleep in a stable. But the frankincense and myrrh had no such practical value. They were the offerings of sentiment and moral imagination. They belonged to the poetry rather than the prose of life.

And all that has large place in the Christian scheme of things. It ranks with Mary’s alabaster box of perfume, which she used to anoint the head and feet of Christ. The commercial instinct of

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a practical man who did not turn out very well was offended on that occasion. He said, "It might have been sold for so much," naming the price, "and the money given to the poor." Yes, it might have been sold, but neither rich nor poor live by cash alone. They live, if they live at all, by all the great words which proceed out of the mouth of God, faith, hope, love, sentiment, devotion, enthusiasm. The Master defended the woman's action—"She hath wrought a beautiful work on Me." The beautiful work as an expression of wholesome sentiment has large place in the development of character.

Here in this broad land fifty odd years ago we had a civil war. A million men from the North went down to fight against another million men more or less in the South. And the men from the North fought on until they had won a notable victory. What made them do it? What kept them at it during those four terrible years? It was not a pleasant nor a profitable thing to do, but they left their farms and their factories, their mills and their mines, their homes and their families, and went down South to be shot at. They received "\$14 a month and hard-tack," yet they turned their backs on all that they held dear and went down cheerily to hardship and danger, to disease and death.

It was just a bit of sentiment on their part. They believed in the integrity of this country and

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they could not bear the thought of having it rent in twain. They loved the flag, which is only a piece of bunting to a man without sentiment, and they were set upon keeping all those stars together in one common field of blue. And moved by these sentiments they fought on under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant until the Union was preserved and the slaves were freed. The finest chapters in the moral history of the race have been written by men who moved out in the strong grip of some noble sentiment.

You may go still further. Here is the final force, the cardinal fact in the moral universe, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son." He loved the world though it was unworthy of his love. He loved us while we were yet sinners. He loved us not because we deserved it, but because we needed it. His own knowledge told Him that in many instances His love would be spurned. But He loved until He gave. And that unstudied, undeserved affection which a father feels for his children, even though they have been doing wrong, is the driving force behind this whole redemptive process which is at last to save men from the guilt and power of their sins. The greatest thing in the world is love and love in the last analysis is a sentiment of intelligent good will.

The three mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines and brought David a drink of

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water from the old well. You could not have hired them to do it. They would not have imperiled their lives in that fashion for a bit of pay. The choicest things in life are never purchased—a woman's kiss of affection, the fine, uncalculating friendship which one man cherishes for another, the devoted self-sacrifice of a mother, the life-blood of a patriot poured out for his country—these great values in life are never bought and sold as if they were meat and potatoes. They are freely given away by the generous souls who have them to offer.

We cannot allow our ministry to the poor to become merely practical and utilitarian without degrading it. The poor people are not mere backs and bellies to be clothed and filled. They, too, are minds and hearts. They have sensibilities and aspirations which crave their satisfaction at the hands of kindly intelligent interest. The social worker may read the "Survey" regularly and have at his tongue's end all the latest words of scientific charity, but if he has never sensed the fragrance of Mary's alabaster box he is grossly incompetent for his task. The finer sentiments which have their place in the lives of rich and poor alike are more precious than rubies or diamonds.

We have all read "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and some of us declaimed it in the days of our youth. "It is a brave description of a

brave ride," as Myron Reed once said. The colonel of the fated regiment at Balaklava received his order, gathered up his bridle-rein and swung himself into the saddle, saying, "Here goes the last of the Cardigans and thirteen thousand pounds a year!" When a young man is the eldest son of a lord and has an income of sixty-five thousand dollars a year coming to him, he has a good deal to lose. And when he lays it all down for the sake of a forlorn hope simply because it belongs to his military duty, he is a good deal of a soldier.

"It was magnificent," someone has said, "but it was not war." I am not so sure about that. If we could reckon up all the moral courage, all the devotion to an ideal, and all the public spirit kindled by the action of those six hundred men, it might seem that they had made a royal investment of their lives. "Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die, Noble six hundred." On all the higher levels of action, the world is ruled mainly by those sentiments which rise supreme above the lesser considerations. Keep, therefore, thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life!

When the three mighty men brought the jug of water to David he would not drink it. Here it was, water from Bethlehem, clear and cold as it was in the days when he saw the bucket come up dripping from the bottom of the well! Here

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were the three men who had brought it standing by to witness his satisfaction, their own faces flushed with the joy of their success and their hearts beating high with the love they bore him.

But David would not touch a drop of it. It would have choked him. He poured out a cup of it and held it up to the light. It had become invested with a new kind of sacredness in his eyes. It had become like the blood-red wine of the Sacrament. It was too precious to be used for any private gratification, even though the gratification might be as innocent as the slaking of thirst with cold water. “Far be it from me, O Lord! Is not this the lifeblood of those men who went in jeopardy of their lives!” He carried it apart and poured it out in sacramental fashion unto the Lord.

Here again I hear some practical man scoff! “Why did he not drink it after the three men had taken all that trouble to get it! It would not do the Lord any good to pour it out before Him. He might have given those men the satisfaction of seeing him drink it.”

But there are things which become invested with values which make them too precious to be used for any kind of physical gratification. In that hour the soul of the man rises above all physical needs. His capacity for worship craves its satisfaction in ways which the materialist knows not of. His kinship with the Eternal

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asserts itself and he is intent upon strengthening that bond which unites his soul with the Soul of the Infinite.

When General Grant retired from the presidency, he made his celebrated tour around the world. He was honored in all lands and was received by many of the crowned heads. When he reached Japan he went, naturally, to the city of Nikko, the city of shrines, and the burial place of the two great Japanese heroes, Iyeyasu and Ieymitsu. There at Nikko is the famous red lacquer bridge across the river, upon which no man has ever walked save only the sacred person of the Emperor.

But as a mark of honor to his American guest and in gratitude for the friendship he had enjoyed, the Emperor gave direction that when General Grant visited Nikko the sacred bridge should be opened and that he should be allowed to walk across.

Then our great American soldier showed that he, too, had all the fine qualities of an uncrowned king. He expressed his deep sense of appreciation for the honor the Emperor had shown him and declined to cross the bridge, so that the sacred tradition might be kept inviolate. It was only a bit of sentiment on both sides, but nobly conceived and nobly expressed it served to strengthen the bond of friendship between that land and ours —a friendship, may it please God, which must

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never be broken by the careless tongues or wicked hands of thoughtless men! Nations as well as individuals are moved to those lines of action which write the noblest pages of their history by the sentiments which possess the heart.

How mighty would be the power of moral imagination could we exercise it upon many of the commodities of our daily life! Here is a young man holding in his hand his monthly allowance of spending money! He is blind if he thinks that the value of that money can be stated in dollars and cents. Money has in it the potentialities of life or of death. It is an expression of life. Into the creation of that bit of value toiling men and women have put the sweat of brow or of brain. If the young man has eyes to see, he will say to himself, "Is not this the lifeblood of those toilers who gave of their best that this value might be created? Far be it from me to use it carelessly, ungratefully, wickedly." He would feel that he was drinking in insolent fashion the heart blood of those toilers if he used a dollar of it in unworthy indulgence.

Here is a woman who rustles into her parlor in all the elegance of her silk and lace! Would God that all such luxury had been made possible by commercial and industrial methods which Jesus Christ would approve. In many cases it is not so. If that woman could see the tired faces and broken bodies of girls working for long hours in factories,

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in sweat shops or in huge department stores where pay is sometimes kept down that profits may be kept up, she would hate the rustle of her finery. She would say, "Far be it from me, O Lord—is not this the wornout tissues of those other lives that I am wearing for my own pleasure?" She could not rest until she was doing something to bring about better industrial methods and a more equitable distribution of the good things of life.

Here is a whole family, the children of good fortune, sitting at an open-grate fire in winter. If they could see in that glowing coal the burned-out vitality and stunted growth of underpaid miners who went in jeopardy of their lives that we might have coal brought to us from the bowels of the earth; if they could see the underpaid breaker boys at the mouth of the pit, their hands torn and bleeding as they pick out the slate, and their lungs blackened by the grime and dust, it would be impossible for them to sit there in open indifference to the lot of their less fortunate fellows. There would be developed in them a passion for social justice which would not rest until they had done something to change all that.

Let me apply that same principle to another still more vital interest! What is it that keeps thousands of strong, red-blooded men in all our cities clean and straight? The considerations of prudence are weak when measured against the

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surging passions of youth. The fear of physical contagion or the dread of social disgrace are utterly inadequate to offset the temptations which are offered in every great city. The decent man is kept decent by the fact that he is too chivalrous to find pleasure in the degradation of a woman's life. The banishment of a daughter from her father's house or the wreck of a woman's life, who ought to be a happy wife and mother in her own home is too vile for his countenance. "Far be it from me, O Lord," he cries. "Not a dollar of my money nor an ounce of my strength shall go to the maintenance of a system which year by year sends a multitude of misguided girls down a swift, short, sharp descent into physical and moral hell." Find pleasure in that—it would be like drinking the lifeblood of a fellow mortal, and a woman at that, for one's physical gratification! He scorns it, as every true man must.

Teach that to your boys as they grow up. Teach it to yourself. The great safeguard of manly honor and of womanly purity is not to be found in statutes nor in policemen. It is not to be found in the frightful charts compiled by medical men nor in the statistics prepared by eugenic societies. It is to be found in the development of that fine spirit of chivalry which David showed three thousand years ago when he refused to slake his thirst on water which represented the lifeblood of a fellow being. The very basis of morality is

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to be found in that instinctive respect which every right-minded man feels for the personality of another. No man is a good man who lacks that, and every man who has it refuses to purchase his pleasure or his profit at the cost of the degradation of any human soul.

Here then is my story, and it is a story of the heart. The homesick longing of a king for another taste of the innocent joys of his youth! The readiness of three brave men to hazard their lives in order to bring him what he craved because they loved him! The fine unwillingness of that king to use what they brought as being now too costly and sacred to be given to anyone save the Lord! Three bits of that noble sentiment which has power to move the heart to those higher levels of feeling and purpose.

Out of the heart are the issues of life. Therefore keep your heart in the presence of those things which are true, pure and just, honorable, lovable and reputable. Keep it there until the inevitable reaction comes in finer forms of feeling. Then let those feelings course through your veins like rich red blood and the God of peace shall be with you!

X

The Wounds of Wrongdoing

HERE in the Bible we find human nature at its best and at its worst! There is light and there is shade and both are needed to give the right effect in pictures and in plays and in Bibles. We see men bearing themselves so nobly upon the stage of action that the Psalmist is moved to say, "Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels." We see men acting so basely that the Apostle is moved to say, "God has given them up to the uncleanness of their hearts and they have changed the truth into a lie." It is all there in the Book because it is all here in us. The Bible holds the mirror up to human nature and shows us every line in her old face.

Here in a familiar story we find words so full of life that if you should cut into them they would bleed. The words are the words of a king, but the cry is the cry of a father. He was a man first and a king afterward. If all the jeweled crowns of earth had been piled upon his head in that hour they would not have kept back that sob. He had been hard hit and now every syllable he utters is full of pain. "O Absalom, my son, my

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son! Would God I had died for thee!" If I could take those words and write them upon the mind of every man here as they stand written on that page of Scripture, the hour would be well spent.

You find there three of the plain, elemental facts in human experience—first, the love of a father for his son. The father's name was David, and he was a king. His son, therefore, was a prince of the realm from his birth. He was a handsome young fellow. "In all Israel there was none so much to be praised for his beauty as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." He was not sent into the world like Richard III, half made up, deformed, unfinished, so that dogs would bark when he limped by. He was a fine-looking young chap.

He was easy and affable in his manner. "When any man came nigh to do him obeisance, Absalom put forth his hand and took him up and kissed him." In that region where the idea still persisted that a certain divinity doth hedge about a king, this democratic spirit on the part of the young prince was most engaging.

He loved a good turnout. "He prepared for himself chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him." It was as if a modern young man of the fortunate class should have the use of half-a-dozen high-priced automobiles. "My father can afford it," he might say, "Why shouldn't I?"

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This young man was a prince and he looked the part and acted the part.

In all this his father loved him as he loved his own soul. The father had been a shepherd boy in his youth. He had led the sheep in green pastures and by still waters, driving off the wolves and the bears with sling and stone. But now that he had risen from those lowly surroundings to a place of power and influence, he found a peculiar joy in satisfying the ambitions of his handsome son. His affection for him was so real and so warm that he lived his own life over again with many an added pleasure in the unfolding life of his boy. You could see his eye kindle and hear a new resonance in his voice when he spoke of his son.

If you want to find any man at his best find him as a father. Take the strong and tender outgoings of his nature in the love he bears for his child. In the love of a man for a woman there is more of the sense of give and take. It is an interchange of joys between equals in their sweet companionship. But in the love of a parent for a child the very unselfishness of that high interest clothes it with an added beauty. And this father whose name was David loved his son Absalom with a beautiful affection which was like the sun shining in its strength. It is against that fair white screen that the darker pictures in this passage are to be shown.

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In the second place, we find the son's rejection of his father's love. Here was a young man doomed to defeat by the very wealth of his advantages! Had he been compelled to make his own way up from some other sheepfold, he might have won out. But he had everything—everything but a soul, and that is something each one must win for himself no matter where he was born.

He was the son of a king with all the advantages and all the perils of high position. He was handsome, and he was courted and flattered until his head was turned clear around so that he looked habitually the wrong way. He was a favorite son and he had been petted until he felt that God had made him a good deal better than the angels. He felt that he was "the whole thing," and when any young man acquires such an aggravated case of enlarged head "on both sides," as we say in pneumonia, nothing but a double portion of divine grace can save him.

This young prince made up his mind that he would like to be king at once without waiting for the slow process of nature to remove his father from the throne. He organized a rebellion and went about sowing the seeds of discord in his father's kingdom with both hands. He stood at the gates of the city where he would meet the disaffected. When any man had a lawsuit and came to the king for judgment, Absalom would say to him, "Thy matter is good and right, but

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there is no one deputed of the king to hear thee. O, that I were made judge in this land that every man might come to me and I would do him justice." We all know the impatience of disappointed litigants. We have read "Bleak House" and we remember "Jarndyce and Jarndyce." The delays of the court are proverbial and in the hearts of those disaffected subjects this false son planted the seeds of rebellion.

"Thus Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." From start to finish, it was a lying, thievish transaction. His gracious manner clothed a treacherous heart. His showy courtesy was only a polished tool to gain his ends. His apparent interest in those who suffered from the delays of the courts masked his own desire to sit upon the throne at once.

He knew that all this would cut his father to the quick. It was the sin against love. It was the action of a thoughtless, reckless nature ready to stab to the heart those who held him dear. All sin is just that. The laws of right and wrong are not abstract principles imposed upon us by arbitrary authority. They are the expression of an intelligent good will intent upon our well-being.

"Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land the Lord thy God giveth thee." This was the word of God from Sinai, and it is the word of every honest heart. The very foundations of the whole moral struc-

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ture are laid in the rightly ordered home. The fidelities and sanctities, the sympathies and sacrifices of family life are meant to be a finite copy of the infinite, moral order which enfolds us. They are meant to be a perpetual revelation of Him from whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named. "Honor thy father and thy mother"—it is the first command with promise, and the sons and daughters of men who disregard it, do so at their peril. Here in our story a handsome young prince who rebelled against the love of his father was doomed. He broke the first command with promise and his days were not long in the land the Lord gave him.

He moved ahead in black ingratitude, treacherously plotting against the authority of the king. In furthering his design he added to all his other evil deeds the uglier sin of religious hypocrisy. He knew the simple, genuine piety of his father's heart. He had thus far given that father small comfort by his own attitude toward religion. He was a godless as well as a thankless son.

But now he announces to his father that he had made a religious vow which must be paid at Hebron, one of the sacred shrines of the older Hebrew faith. The heart of David rejoiced over this sign of an emerging piety in the life of the wayward son. Then, ostensibly to make a devout pilgrimage, but in reality to proclaim his revolution at the place which had once been the capital

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of the country, Absalom sets out for Hebron. “And thus I clothe my naked villainy in old, odd ends stolen forth from Holy Writ and seem a saint when most I play the devil.”

What a frightful thing it is to borrow the livery of Heaven to serve Satan! When Charles II took the Covenant insincerely, merely to enlist the support of the Scotch, the world condemned him more severely for that than for his open acts of wickedness. He was counterfeiting the coin of the realm in spiritual affairs. When the false French king, devoid of religious conviction, received the sacred rites of the Roman Church, saying in cynical fashion, “Paris is surely worth a mass or two,” his deed was held in greater abhorrence than were his acts of immorality. The world hates a liar. It demands that every man should be real, whether he is gold or brass.

Yonder at sacred Hebron this false, rebellious son set up his standards of revolt. He called upon the followers he had won to make their attack upon rightful authority. It came so swiftly that at first it was successful. The king was actually driven from his capital in painful, perilous flight. He suffered this grievous wrong at the hands of the son of his love.

But the success of that ill-starred movement was short-lived. When the experienced generals and able warriors of the old king were once set in battle array, they speedily proved too much for

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the raw recruits of the young prince. The rebels were routed and there was a great slaughter of twenty thousand of their men. The cowardly leader of the revolt, intent upon saving himself, abandoned his army and fled for his life upon his own mule into the midst of a thicket. Here the long hair which had been kept in his vanity proved his undoing. His hair caught in the prickly boughs of an overhanging oak. While he was struggling to release himself his mule ran out from under him, leaving him half suspended and helpless. Here the soldiers of the king overtook him and shot him through the heart with three sharp darts, leaving him dead in the midst of the oak. And that was the end of the young man who rebelled against the love of a father.

We come now to the third scene, the father's grief over the fall of his son. When that fateful day dawned for the battle of the king's army with the forces of revolt, the king himself sat in the gate awaiting news from the field. He had charged his ablest general Joab the day before, "Deal gently with the young man for my sake—deal gently with Absalom." While he sat thus in the gate one of his courtiers with younger, keener eyes saw a man running. When the runner drew near he called out, "All is well! Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered up the men who rose against my lord, the king."

But the king brushed aside this report of mili-

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tary success—"Is the young man safe?" he cried, "Is Absalom safe?" This runner did not know. Then another man was seen running and when he drew near he called out, "The Lord hath avenged thee this day against all them that rose up against thee." But the king again thrust aside this report of victory—"Is the young man Absalom safe?" This messenger had been in the thicket when the end came and he added in quiet tones, "May all the enemies of my lord, the king, who rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is!"

The truth was out. His son was dead, and dead in the hour of his wrongdoing. He had sinned against love. In cruel, treacherous fashion he was showing his contempt for his father's love at the very moment when he was shot through the heart by the darts of Joab.

The king's son was dead and he was disgraced. Where now in this wide world shall this broken-hearted father look for comfort! This was the sorry return which the handsome young prince had made for all the wealth of affection poured out upon him. "O Absalom, my son, my son," he cried, "would God I had died for thee!" And then "the king went up to his chamber over the gate"—it was a narrow little room. It does not take a very big place for a man to cry in. And the king was there alone with his grief—his own son had broken his heart.

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How these lives of ours are knit up with all those other lives! No man liveth unto himself, no man dieth unto himself, no man sinneth unto himself. We are all bound together in a moral solidarity from which there is no escape. You thought that sin of yours was all your own affair—that was all you knew about it. You found out to your sorrow that it was not so. It was his affair and hers and His. When you covered your own life with shame, they were all shamed. When you stooped to that which was wrong, they all suffered. They suffered more than you did because they were better and because they loved you more than you loved them, or you would not have done it. The tears which came in their eyes, and the break which came in their voices, and the weight which settled down upon their hearts were all put there by your wrongdoing.

If fathers and sons alike could exercise in advance a bit of moral imagination touching the effect of their wrongdoing upon each other, it would serve as a mighty deterrent. A rough workingman left his home one winter morning in Chicago on his way to the factory. There had been a heavy snowfall the night before. Because the day was cold and the man was not feeling quite up to the mark, he decided that he must have a bracer before he went to his work. He was heading for the rum shop at the next corner. As he plowed his way along through the snow he

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heard a small voice pipe out behind him, "Father, I am coming, too. I am putting my feet in your tracks."

The man did not go to the saloon that morning when the significance of the situation dawned upon him. He would make no tracks into the door of a rum shop for his boy. And if every son on earth could look ahead and picture to himself the pain and the loss which his evildoing would bring to the heart of his father, it would give him pause. He would say as one said long ago, "How can I! How can I smite the fair face of affection with the foul hand of an evil deed?"

It matters little what form this rebellion against love may take. It may take any one of a thousand forms. Here in the story it took the form of a political conspiracy against the rightful authority of the king. It may come in the coarse sins of the flesh, which bring the flush of shame to the faces of parents when their own sons are guilty. It may take the form of arrogance, selfishness, cold contempt for the dearest desires and aspirations of those who love us. It may come in a flippant, scornful rejection of those principles of godly living which mean everything to those who hold us dear. In each case the evil is the same —the thoughtless, selfish, godless soul draws his dagger and stabs the heart of affection to the core. In each case it is a sin against love, and I care not where that evildoer may be doing his own bit of

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iniquity, if he will listen he will hear that old Hebrew yonder on the hills of Judea sobbing yet. "O Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee!"

We face here one of the cardinal truths of our Christian faith. Why is there a cross on the spire of the church? What does Calvary mean to us? What moral efficacy has that great truth of the atonement? The main force of it all lies here. When the Son of Man suffered at the hands of evil men on Calvary, it was a revelation in time of something which is eternal and universal. It was the supreme manifestation of the eternal heartache and heartbreak in the life of God because of the sins of His children. There is a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. When any man sins the guilt of it and the pain of it are felt all the way up to the Great White Throne because the man is a child of God, and the God who sits upon that throne is "Our Father." He is wounded by our transgressions. He is bruised by our iniquities. It is by His stripes that we are healed and the chastisement of our peace is upon Him. The cry of the king, "O Absalom, my son," is a human echo of the divine cry which comes to us across the ages.

Hear this old Hebrew saying what fatherhood has always said in the presence of the evil doing of its children—"O Absalom, my son, how could you?" You notice the term he uses even in that

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hour of pain. He does not say, "Absalom, the traitor, the leader of a political revolt, the demagogue who stole the hearts of the people." It was, "Absalom, my son," and that was the tragedy of it. And the father of the prodigal in that classical passage on redemption in harking back to the days of his pain did not say—"That fast young man who wasted his substance in riotous living! That spendthrift who ran through all I gave him and began to be in want." It was none of this—"It is meet that we should make merry, for this *my son* was lost and is found; he was dead and is alive again." It is "my son" throughout, for there is a love that will not let us go.

When we turn the reverse side of this shield, how glorious are the lines engraved upon it! Nothing on earth or in Heaven suffers as affection suffers when it is outraged by the objects of its devotion. And nothing on earth or in Heaven can rejoice as affection rejoices when it sees the travail of its soul and is satisfied in the realization of its dearest hopes.

Have the skies ever heard a lovelier strain of music than the one which broke through when Jesus of Nazareth was baptized in the river Jordan? It was God the Father who spoke in that high hour and said, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" Here was a Son who did always the Will of the Father! Here was a Son who at the end of His life could

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look up and say, "Father, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." And the satisfaction of that Father's heart in that supreme hour over the right life of His Son was enough to set all the angels in the skies to singing.

I have thought of all this many times in these recent months when the call has come for the young men of our country to don the garb of public service. There were shortsighted individuals who were saying that the sons of good fortune were given over to luxury and self-indulgence, that the moral fibre had been eaten out of them. How little they knew! The fine material of moral passion and of national vigor was all there in waiting. When the voice of the President and of a great international necessity rang out saying, "Who will go for us, whom shall we send?" the response came back in that same hour from the best we breed, "Here am I, send me."

And when they came to be weighed in the balance, they were not found wanting. They had not laid waste their powers in dissipation and vice. They were able to pass those medical examinations which take only the firstlings of the flock. It was the battle of the Lord which was to be fought and they were lined up on the side of moral idealism.

It has brought anxious days and sleepless hours at night to the hearts of the fathers and mothers who have seen them go. They loved their boys

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as David loved Absalom and now they saw them going forth into the realm of fire and sword. The parents could only remain behind to wait and watch and pray.

But how much more terrible it would have been in those grave times had their sons been all unwilling or unfit for that high service! How much more grievous had these parents been compelled to see what David saw, the lives of their sons stained with cowardice and treachery! The hearts of those fathers and mothers, heavy with a great anxiety, could still look up to Him who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. They could gain from Him comfort and courage for their own hour of need.

And nowhere has this response of young manhood to the call of duty been more complete or more satisfying than in our colleges. We have seen it here on the Campus at Yale as other men and women have seen it in all the colleges and universities of the land. The spirit of it has been finely expressed in these lines.

“I saw the spires of Oxford
As I was passing by,
The gray spires of Oxford
Against a pearl-gray sky.
My heart was with the Oxford men
Who went abroad to die.

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“The years go fast in Oxford,
 The golden years and gay;
The hoary colleges look down
 On careless boys at play;
But when the bugles sounded war,
 They put their games away.

“They left the peaceful river,
 The cricket-field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford,
 To seek a bloody sod—
They gave their merry youth away
 For country and for God.

“God rest you, happy gentlemen,
 Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun
 Instead of cap and gown.
God bring you to a fairer place
 Than even Oxford town.”

And when those young men, who have been striving to do the will of the Father, have fought their good fight and have finished their course and have kept their faith, they will find laid up for them a crown of rejoicing. They will find that they have filled the hearts of their fathers on earth and of their Father in Heaven with a joy unspeakable.



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